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Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

BRIAN SIMON — THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

GORDON McLENNAN AND BOB McILHONE — THE CASE FOR DIRECTION OF INDUSTRY TO SCOTLAND

A. SOHN-RETHEL — HISTORICAL MATERIALIST THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

DISCUSSION:

NIGEL KELSEY — LABOUR: WHAT NEXT?

JAMES HARVEY AND WILLIAM McCALLUM — PROBLEMS OF INFLATION

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Marxism Today

Vol. 9 No. 4

CONTENTS

		page
	Editorial Comments	97
Brian SIMON	**The Future of Higher Education**	102
Gordon MCLENNAN and Bob MCILHONE	**The Case for Direction of Industry to Scotland**	108
A. SOHN-RETHEL	**Historical Materialist Theory of Knowledge**	114
DISCUSSION:		
Nigel KELSEY	**Labour: What Next?**	123
James HARVEY and William MCCALLUM	**Problems of Inflation**	126

AMONG ARTICLES IN MAY AND FORTHCOMING ISSUES

ECONOMIC COMMITTEE	**Report to Communist Party Executive Committee**
Brian KIRMAN	**Modern Trends in Psychology**
Andrew TAYLOR	**Necessity and Chance in Physics (Part II)**
Chris ALLEN	**Freedom Now! (Civil Rights in U.S.A.)**
Maurice HOOKHAM	**Marxism and Sociology**
Jessie KOCMANOVA	**The Socialist Poems of William Morris**
Frida KNIGHT	**The French Resistance**

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Editorial Comments

THE abandonment of resale price maintenance by the Distillers company naturally raises the question of what is happening to resale price maintenance elsewhere.

During the debates in 1963 harrowing tales were told about the ruin of masses of small shopkeepers when the great supermarkets started to cut prices immediately the Bill was passed. Instead of which prices continued climbing as usual. In fact, most of the firms enforcing resale price maintenance are exercising their right to appeal to be allowed to continue this practice. Over 700 manufacturers, suppliers, and trade associations are appealing, and no less than 10,000 different goods are involved. No wonder the *Times Review of Industry* declares that:

> "If all the cases were to be fought, and unfavourable decisions appealed against, years would probably pass before the abolition of resale price maintenance became fully effective".

The *Times Review* thinks that some of the firms appealing have no chance of securing exemption but,

> "the only reason for the appearance of some of them on the list must be that manufacturers feel they have nothing to lose by seeking exemption—except perhaps some of the glitter from their public image—and a lot to gain by winning one or two years R.P.M. reprieve until their case is heard".

We hope Mr. George Brown will note how really difficult it is to make an impact on prices. Perhaps the next thing to do is to amend the R.P.M. Act so that price maintenance can be abolished straightaway, giving firms the right to make a case, before the Restrictive Practices court, for its restoration in their particular case. The Tory R.P.M. Act gave the large company practising price maintenance the benefit of the doubt while its position was being investigated. Surely it is time to reverse this and give the customer the benefit of the doubt.

Gaggle of Experts

Soon after this issue is available we will know whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer has taken the advice of a whole gaggle of "experts", and adopted deflationary tax measures in his Budget. According to the *National Institute Economic Review* there are, however, a number of bold spirits who say that no deflation is necessary, and if British industry were left alone this time, things would work out all right.

> "There are those who argue against this view that room has to be made for any further balance of payment improvement on the ground that the country's productive potential has been underestimated. They say that the method used to estimate this potential is based on the experience of the economy at a time when demand and output were fluctuating and one cannot properly extrapolate from such a period into one where demand for labour is kept continuously high as at present. Productivity they say will rise faster because labour is short."

The *Economic Review* is in a state of jitters and says that "this is risky". It also says that the government should not restrict the export of capital, to the sterling area because:

> "other sterling countries would begin to wonder what advantages there were left in holding their reserves in the form of sterling balances in London".

Britain will spend £250 million in foreign travel this year but we shouldn't cut it because it might "invite retaliation".

So everybody has to be conciliated, the capitalists in the Dominions, the foreign governments, the British militarists defending overseas military expenditure—everybody except the poor old British taxpayer who ought, in the opinion of the *Economic Review*, to shoulder another £200 million of taxation, to prevent these other interests being bothered.

Either the excessive export of capital is harmful to the economy or it is not. If it is, why should it be permitted to go on year after year, lest someone, somewhere, should be annoyed.

The Magic Carpet

Walter Reuther, of the United Automobile Workers, has just dug up a quotation from a statement of the National Association of Manufacturers (U.S.A.) on automation, issued in the 1950's, which goes as follows:

> "Guided by electronics, powered by atomic energy, geared to the smooth effortless working of automation, the magic carpet of our free economy heads for distant and undreamed of horizons. Just going along for the ride will be the biggest thrill on earth."

There appears to be a hole in the carpet for Reuther comments:

> "the ride became bumpy, with two recessions and a rate of unemployment that averaged 5.8 per cent of the labour force in the 1957-61 period, even during the phases of 'recovery' from recession troughs. Even in the past several years of general

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> affluence, the unemployment rate has just dipped below 5 per cent and has never come close to the conservative 4 per cent norm set by the Kennedy administration as a target."

Automation in the U.S.A. has not even begun to reduce poverty and Reuther calls for:

> "an all-out attack on poverty and deprivation which keep about 66 million Americans from a decent standard of living by current norms".

In short, automation creates more and more problems unless it is controlled in the interests of the people.

Socialist Profits

For some time now the British (and other) capitalist press has been rejoicing at the idea that the socialist countries have had to come back to the old capitalist notion of profit as the aim of production. As Professor Liberman, the Soviet economist, whose name has been associated with the idea, explained in an interview with the *Daily Worker*, profit in a socialist economy is merely an expression of surplus product.

> "If we didn't have any surplus product, then we would be consuming everything we produced, and it would be quite impossible for society to develop."

So from the very start of the revolution "profit" in the sense of surplus product has been aimed at in the Soviet Union; otherwise there could not have been the transformation of Tsarist Russia into a powerful industrial country with steadily improving conditions for the people.

In so far as there is a new stress on profit, it is because, ever since the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the methods of management of industry have been under active discussion, and many changes and experiments have been made (and are still being made) both in the bodies responsible for running industry and in strengthening the economic management of the various enterprises.

As *The Times* observed editorially on February 24th 1965,

> "It is important to realise that the shift is not to capitalism but to a degree of capitalist methodology . . . public ownership of production and marketing remains, and planning is not being dropped but modified and concentrated more on broad outlines".

We hope to print some account of the changes which are being made in Soviet industry (and also in other socialist countries), explaining the reasons for these changes and the results obtained.

Progress in Liberation of Angola

An event of considerable significance for the liberation of Angola from Portuguese rule has recently been reported. The Committee for the Liberation of Africa, set up by the Organisation of African Unity (O.A.U.), and commonly known as the Committee of Nine, has decided to recognise the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (M.P.L.A.) and to give it technical and material help in its struggle against Portuguese imperialism.

Up till recently, the Committee of Nine had given recognition only to the so-called "Revolutionary Government of Angola", set up by Roberto Holden. This "Government" established its headquarters in Leopoldville, where it received arms and money (some of it, it is believed, from the U.S.) ostensibly for the setting up of armed formations for the liberation of Angola. In practice, the supporters of Holden have done very little to help liberate their country, but instead have carried out hostile activities and even armed attacks against the forces of the patriotic M.P.L.A., and have tried to stir up tribal strife in Angola.

By a series of manoeuvres, by smear tactics against the M.P.L.A., and by securing the support of the previous Adoula regime in Congo—Leopoldville, to close down the M.P.L.A. offices in Leopoldville, the Holden group was able to create a false impression to the representatives of the Committee of Nine in 1963 that it represented the forces fighting the Portuguese in Angola, and that the M.P.L.A. was not worth considering.

In recent months it has become increasingly obvious that the Holden group, his armed forces and his "Government" are in a state of demoralisation, and do not merit any help from the African states. The M.P.L.A., on the other hand, is getting stronger, is becoming more united, and is increasingly engaging the Portuguese forces in Angola.

To help resolve the situation, the Committee of Nine set up a Commission consisting of representatives of Ghana, Congo-Brazzaville and the U.A.R., with a mandate of finding the means of bringing about understanding, co-operation and unity between the different liberation movements in Angola.

The Commission Investigates

The Commission met in Cairo, October 12th-14th, 1964, and asked for representatives of the M.P.L.A. and the Holden group to appear before it. Holden refused to come. The Commission therefore proceeded to hold discussions with representatives of the M.P.L.A. Holden then changed his attitude, and wrote to the Commission saying he was willing to assist it. He was again invited to send representatives to meet the Commission, this time in Dar-es-Salaam, on November 23rd.

Meanwhile, the Commission investigated the

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activities of the M.P.L.A. The official report issued in December 1964 runs as follows:

> "The Commission went to Brazzaville, where it had the opportunity of visiting the Offices of the M.P.L.A., and it took note of the activity and administrative organisation of the movement. From Brazzaville, the Commission thought it useful to go to the Congolese frontier (Brazzaville) with Cabinda, in order to visit the military bases and training centres of the movement. It visited one of the bases nearest to the frontier. The Commission was also invited to visit some more distant bases and even in the interior of Cabinda. Convinced of the seriousness of the activities of the M.P.L.A., the Commission did not think it necessary, in spite of the insistence of the partisans of the M.P.L.A., to proceed to a more exhaustive inquiry in the other bases.
>
> "During these visits, the Commission had the opportunity of having discussions with a large number of M.P.L.A. adherents, ranging from members of the Political Bureau and Central Committee to the youngest militants and members of the resistance. It drew the following conclusions from them:
>
> 1. The M.P.L.A. already possesses a military, political and administrative organisation.
> 2. The militants of the M.P.L.A. are inspired by a highly developed sense of nationalism and patriotism, but lack the necessary material means to fulfil their objective of the total liberation of Angola.
> 3. The leaders of the M.P.L.A. understand the importance of what is at stake, and the limitations of their military potential, restricting themselves for the time being to a limited reaction with the means at their disposal, which is not to be undervalued but which can be enlarged as and when necessary military supplies become available."

When the Commission subsequently met at Dar-es-Salaam on November 23rd, nobody came from the Holden group. Only the M.P.L.A. representatives presented themselves. The Commission therefore came to the following conclusions:

> "The Commission, convinced that the struggle for the total liberation of Angola must not be subordinated unconditionally to unity between the different liberation movements, in conformity with the spirit which inspired the deliberation of the first Conference of Heads of State on this point, allows itself to make the following recommendations:
>
> "1. The M.P.L.A. is a serious movement, active and capable of leading an effective struggle, a fact which entitles it to receive aid and assistance from the Committee for the Co-ordination of the Liberation of Africa.
>
> "2. The assistance which the Committee of Nine could accord to it falls under two heads:
>
> (*a*) *Technical Assistance:*
> Intensification of training—
> More co-ordinated military technical assistance.
>
> (*b*) *Material Help.*
>
> "3. The Committee of Liberation should, however, continue to search for ways and means of arriving at conciliation between the two movements."

"Hallstein" Dented

West German leaders have struck a bad patch in two independent African states, Egypt and Tanzania. For many years they have stuck to the "Hallstein doctrine", named after Professor Hallstein, who laid it down that West Germany should not have diplomatic or trading relations with any government (except the Soviet Union) which has similar relations with the German Democratic Republic (East Germany).

Then came the news that Walter Ulbricht, President of the G.D.R., was invited to visit Egypt. At the same time, the news leaked out that West Germany was sending arms to Israel. The West German protest against Ulbricht's visit was countered by President Nasser's action in breaking off trading relations with West Germany. Moreover, seven West German agents in Egypt have been arrested and deported.

On the other hand, Walter Ulbricht had a tumultuous reception everywhere during his visit. Before his departure a new trade agreement was announced in which the G.D.R. will provide Egypt with credits of £25 million for ten years at 2½ per cent interest, and a smaller one of £11 million for five years. Egypt will repay in agricultural and semi-manufactured goods, and there will be technical co-operation and an exchange of instructors.

Tanzania also seems to be making a bigger dent in the "Hallstein doctrine". After the Zanzibar revolution of January 1964 the new Revolutionary Council recognised the G.D.R. Tanganyika recognised only West Germany, so that after the Tanzania union there was a G.D.R. embassy in Zanzibar and a West German embassy in Tanganyika.

After a long tug-of-war on this issue there was agreement to close the G.D.R. embassy in Zanzibar on condition there was established a G.D.R. Consulate-General in Tanganyika.

This was a bitter blow to the West German leaders. They had West German military instructors in Tanganyika, and decided to withdraw them all. At the time of writing this issue is still in the balance, but it seems clear that West Germany is running into serious trouble in trying to enforce its "Hallstein doctrine" in Africa.

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Rich and Poor

For the year 1962-63 (the latest details given in the 1964 Report of the Inland Revenue Commissioners just published) there were 88 persons with official incomes of over £100,000, and another 99 with official incomes of between £75,000 and £100,000.

"Official" because the richer the individual, the more accountants and lawyers he can employ to find ways of "avoiding" income tax and surtax.

In round figures, these incomes are £2,000 or £1,500 *per week*.

At the other end of the scale, there were 6,100,000 incomes (husband and wife's earnings counting as one) of under £10 a week, and another 6,450,000 incomes of between £10 and £16 a week.

Of those persons assessed to surtax (262,000), their *earned* incomes totalled £757 million, and their *investment* incomes totalled £748 million.

In the 10 years 1954-55 to 1963-64 the death duties table shows 96 cases where the net value of the estate was over £1 million, and the total value of these estates was £223 million—and the note already made about "avoiding" taxation applies with special force to death duties, so that the real amount left by these 96 persons must have been considerably more than this.

Coexistence

One is glad to see that, despite the death of Karl Polanyi (who was so largely responsible for its launching), the second number of a new journal with the arresting title of *Co-existence* has appeared. Published in Canada, it is edited from Scotland by Dr. Rudolf Schlesinger; as its name implies, it is devoted to the study of so-called East-West relations; and its international Editorial Board includes such names as Adam Schaff and Oskar Lange from Warsaw, the economist Ragnar Frisch from Oslo, and Gunnar Myrdal from Stockholm, Professor Tsuru of Tokyo, and Professor Mahalanobis of Calcutta, along with Professor-elect Joan Robinson and Professor Kenneth Muir from this country. Another name that will be known to economists is that of Tinbergen of Holland.

This second number opens with an article on last year's World Trade Conference by Jozsef Bognar of the Karl Marx Economic University of Budapest, followed by a shorter article on East-West Trade. Another contribution from Budapest is on Comparative Analysis of Socialist and Capitalist Law. There are also three articles on the Sino-Soviet Dispute (one by the editor himself and one by the Indian Communist Mohit Sen), and another article on the late Pope John's attitude to Communism.

With its publicity budget on a shoe-string, this journal is much less well known than its interest and topicality warrant.

History Teaching

Six years ago *Marxism Today* (January 1959) published a report which summarised a discussion organised by the Communist Party Historians Group (now called the History Group) on problems related to the teaching of history especially in schools.

That report emphasised the need for an approach to the study of history that would give the student a perspective of development on a world scale instead of the narrow nationalist (and often chauvinist) approach, or one that regarded Europe and its civilisation as the only things of importance. It stressed the fact that we face a new epoch in world history in which the essential thing is not the struggle between nations for wealth and possessions, but the development of a new world order made possible by scientific and technological developments and necessary for man's survival.

How far has the teaching of history progressed in this direction in those six years? What influence has the work of Marxist and other progressive historians had on the textbooks and syllabuses used in schools? These are questions it would be useful to try to answer. In fact, it is time for another discussion that would make a critical appraisal of the approach made today by the writers of text books, and to consider what are the most urgent needs in the teaching of history in schools and what contribution towards meeting these needs can be made by Marxists and others interested in a humanist approach to the subject.

The History Group is calling such a conference, to which teachers of history at all levels will be specially invited, next month in London. The conference will be in two sessions on one day (a Saturday) and the History Group would be glad to hear from any reader of *Marxism Today* who would like to attend. The group would also like to receive written comments and suggestions from those who have had experience in the field. If you are interested please write to the Secretary, C.P. History Group, 16 King Street, London, W.C.2.

Czechoslovakia Fights

There has been a pretty consistent effort by reactionary Western historians to play down or distort the role played by Communists in the resistance and partisan struggles of the second world war.

Fortunately in recent years a whole number of detailed studies have been published on the Resistance Movements in France, Italy, Germany, Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, on the activities of the Soviet partisans etc.

We would like to welcome here one of the most

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recent of these studies, happily available in the English language—*Czechoslovakia Fights: 1938-1945* by Jiri Dolezal and Jan Kren.[1] These are documents of the Resistance Movement of the Czechoslovak people published under the auspices of a special committee on Resistance History.

Research into resistance and partisan movements is always extremely difficult. So few documents remain, so many participants were killed, there were so few records at the time. As the editors themselves write:

> "Illegality, gaps in the records, the death of many members whose evidence alone could throw light on some events, the division of the movement into two separate currents—within the country itself and beyond its borders—these are some of the problems which complicate the historians' task."

The documents begin with those events that lead to the need for a Resistance Movement, i.e. the Hitlerian occupation. A big share of the blame lies, of course, with the appeasement policy of *British* reaction. Who, from Britain, can read without bitterness and a sense of responsibility, the second document of the collection, dated September 28th, 1938—a message from Chamberlain to Hitler:

> ". . . I feel certain that you can get all essentials without war and without delay . . . I feel convinced we could reach agreement in a week. However much you may distrust Prague Government's intentions, you cannot doubt power of British and French Governments to see that promises are carried out . . . As you know I have stated publicly that we are prepared to undertake that they shall be so carried out."

Document after document contains resolutions, declarations and manifestos of the illegal Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, from March 1939 onwards, calling for resistance to the fascist occupation by every means. For those sceptics who are unwilling to trust the records of the illegal movement, irrefutable evidence of the role of the Czechoslovak Communists at the head of the Resistance is provided by the many reports from the German Security organisation, the *Sicherheitsdienst*, on the resistance and partisan struggles of the Czechoslovak people and of the role of the Communists in particular.

[1] *Czechoslovakia Fights*. Publishing House of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, Prague, 1964.

More and More Marxism

The amount of discussion and research by Marxists all over the world is increasing from year to year. So much so that it is ever more difficult to keep up with even knowledge of the existence of the main works.

We try from month to month in these notes to indicate a few of the new publications in different countries. It would be possible to do more. Would that be useful? We would like to hear from readers who have opinions on this.

The *Dietz Publishing House* in the German Democratic Republic is still extending its work. I would like just to note one new publication, a reprint, in a revised edition of a short and well-documented history of the German Labour movement between 1933 and 1945 entitled *Germany and the German Working Class Movement, 1933-1945*.[2] Particularly important is the description of the anti-fascist movement in Germany and the role of the illegal Communist Party. It is useful too to have a short summary of the German anti-fascist Resistance Movement during the war, a movement about which so little is known outside the G.D.R.

One Soviet book that I should like to mention, though it has been available for about a year, is *The Specific Nature of the Development of Capitalism in India* by A. I. Levkovski, published by the Publishing House of Eastern Literature, in Moscow.[3] This is a detailed study which covers the beginning of exploitation in India by British merchant and industrial capital, the effects of imperialism on the Indian economy, the development of a specifically Indian bourgeoisie, the relation of the British and Indian capitalists. It ends with a study of state capitalism in contemporary India and a discussion of the "mixed economy" and the contradictory trends in the development of capitalism in India today.

[2] Horst Laschitza and Siegfried Vietzke—*Deutschland und die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung, 1933-1945*. Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1964.

[3] A. I. Levkovskii—*Osobennosti Razvitiya Kapitalizma V Indii*, Izdatelstvo Vostochnoi Literaturi, Moscow, 1963.

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The Future of Higher Education

Brian Simon

THE Labour Government has been in office for five months. In its election manifesto and general propaganda Labour spokesmen placed great emphasis on education, science and technology. "Labour," declared the manifesto, "will carry though a revolution in our educational system." It will cut down the size of classes, get rid of eleven-plus selection, extend compulsory day and block release, and give priority to "a crash programme of teacher recruitment". As regards higher education the manifesto was no less specific: "Labour will carry out a programme of massive expansion in higher, further and university education".

Here, then, was a promise of immediate advance. In 1963 the Taylor Committee had reported on higher education to the Labour Party Executive. This report stressed the necessity for an emergency crash programme over the next five years together with long-term planning over a ten-year period, the establishment of forty-five new universities with a total of 700,000 students by 1980, and included many other positive suggestions. "Higher education is facing a crisis of exceptional severity," wrote Harold Wilson in his foreword. "If disaster is to be averted, vigorous action will be essential *the moment a Labour Government is returned to power*" [my italics. *B.S.*]

The 100 days have passed—and many more. Apart from a few imaginative appointments in education and technology (Bowden, Snow, Cousins) no action of any importance has been taken to ease the position in higher education—rather the reverse. The determination of the Labour Government to maintain the U.S. alliance, overseas bases, to "defend" Malaysia, in fact to carry out a bipartisan imperialist policy has meant that the balance of payments crisis is as sharp as ever. Without a fundamental change in foreign policy together with substantial cuts in military expenditure, a radical fiscal policy and a high rate of economic growth, the resources to implement the election programmes cannot be made available. This applies to every field of public expenditure as well as education.

In this position the Communist Party has a clear duty. It is to take the lead in the struggle for education all along the line; to insist on the implementation of policies put forward by the Communist as well as by the Labour Party and to drive home the necessity for political and social change. The struggle for educational advance, of profound importance for the future of our country, must be linked in this way to the struggle for socialism.

The Communist Party advanced an all-round programme for higher education in its evidence to the Robbins Committee in July 1961. Published as a pamphlet, this was widely sold in the universities, technical colleges and elsewhere. It is necessary now to re-examine the overall position, to clarify our policy in terms of the present situation. Before doing so, however, it will be as well to examine the main developments in this field since the publication of the Robbins Report in October 1963. This involves decisions taken both by the expiring Tory Government, and by Labour.

The Universities

We may start with the universities. Immediately on the publication of the Robbins Report, these were asked to estimate the extent to which they could expand over the three years 1965-8, the crisis years in relation to the bulge in the birth-rate. The universities responded well—among staffs as a whole there was a genuine desire to ensure a rapid expansion. Some proposed to double the number of their students in the three-year period. These estimates were, however, cut down by the University Grants Committee so that the planned overall expansion met the minimum figure proposed by Robbins.

This in itself was disheartening, but the real blow fell when Hogg announced the capital grants which would be made available to the universities in 1966-69 to finance this expansion. The figure, £83 million, was greeted with dismay by Vice-Chancellors and others; it was so low that the universities were unable to see how they could finance buildings which were absolutely necessary to accommodate the increased numbers which the U.G.C. had itself accepted. These grants were also based on the assumption that the number of students in universities would remain static in the years 1969-71, one of the more conservative of the Robbins estimates.

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Labour's promise of a "massive advance", of "vigorous action" on the formation of a government was, therefore, immediately put to the test. But nothing whatsoever was done. The capital grant has not been increased by a single penny. As a delegate put it at the conference of the Association of University Teachers in December: "We confidently expected the present government to revise these figures. But we were told we would have to work on the Conservatives' figures. . . . Both parties," he added, "accepted the Robbins Report figures of required student expansion, and then did not accept the means which were required to meet that need."[1]

The only other major decision the Government has taken in the field of higher education is again a negative one—the decision not to implement the Robbins Committee's proposal that the control and financing of training colleges (or colleges of education as they are now to be called) should be taken out of the hands of local authorities and placed in those of the universities. This step, admittedly controversial in some ways, is essential if a genuinely unified system of higher education, comprising a variety of institutions of *equal* status, is to be established. This was the policy of the Communist Party, as well as of many other organisations, including that of teachers in training colleges. The refusal of Labour to implement it is a setback, perpetuating the existence of first and second class institutions in this field.

Crosland's statement of Government policy late in February added nothing new, apart from announcing that the Government accepted the Robbins targets for university and training college expansion to 1973-74, and adding that there was no intention to proceed with the Robbins Committee's proposals to develop five institutions as S.I.S.T.E.R.s (Special Institutions for Scientific and Technological Education and Research). The Government's record, therefore, is far from brilliant. Indeed it is difficult to see how the Conservatives could have done worse! Since the Robbins Report was published, however, a number of important developments have been taking place not always requiring Government action or intervention. These may be briefly surveyed.

New Universities

A number of new universities have been established in the last few years, mostly in cathedral cities (York, Canterbury, Lancaster, Warwick, Norwich—the "Shakespeareans", as they have been called). Many of these are now taking their first groups of students. The Labour Government has announced that no new universities of this type will be set up, and indeed it is difficult to justify the establishment of institutions so isolated from the great industrial centres of population. This further decision means, however, that such expansion as is envisaged must take place largely in the old-established "modern" universities in the provincial cities. Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham must look forward to a student population of from 8,000 to 10,000 or more, while the lesser group such as Hull, Leicester, Exeter will have to plan for up to 5,000 students. In addition the ten colleges of advanced technology are now preparing to receive their charters as full universities. It seems likely that new universities will be developed from existing technical and possibly training colleges in the future, possibly through the fusion of two or three different institutions. Crosland announced in February that one new technological university may be set up in the North-East.

In the meantime the actual development of new universities is having a stimulating effect on discussions about the content of education and university organisation. Books and articles are appearing raising important questions as to the nature of university education; last year the Reith lectures, given by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Essex (at Colchester), provoked a great deal of controversy. The tendency in the new universities is towards the breakdown of the extreme specialisation and departmentalisation typical of the older universities, the establishment of "schools" of studies cutting across the subject divisions, the rejection even of the faculty organisation which has been traditional since medieval times. The universities need shaking up and this effervescence is all to the good. In its evidence to Robbins, the Communist Party advanced definite proposals as regard the content of education. Marxists should, then, be involved in this dialogue—have, in fact, a particular contribution to make, since they should understand better than others the need for a systematic integration of different fields of knowledge.

In the meantime, much concern has been expressed at the failure of the universities to fill all their places this year. The shortfall of 1,500 has been almost entirely in pure science and technology. To get the matter in perspective it should be made clear that the intake of pure scientists into the universities in October 1964 was up by 870 over the year before, that of technologists was up by 250, while in the colleges of advanced technology, the increase of both was just under 2,000. Nevertheless the fact remains that the universities were equipped to educate another 1,500 students if they could have been found. But we should also note that there were

[1] The Government has increased the recurrent grant for 1964-65 by £5½ million, to make up for the decline in the value of money.

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very many who applied to universities who could *not* get a place—58,000 applications were made through the University Clearing House alone, nearly 20,000 of whom failed to get in. Some 6,000 of these were admitted to technical or training colleges. Clearly there are several thousands qualified to enter university arts and social science faculties who were not offered a place. Since the standard of "qualification" varies from university to university (and from faculty to faculty within a single university) it seems impossible to arrive at any quite definite figure of "qualified" students who were rejected. In the interests of both potential students and universities the whole question of entrance requirements needs clearing up along the lines put forward in the Communist Party's Robbins evidence. The only just solution is that entrance qualifications for all higher educational institutions should be made uniform, an effective clearing house system developed, and sufficient places be made available.

Finally we should note the publication of the Hale Committee's report on University Teaching Methods (1964) and the sittings of the Franks Committee at Oxford. The Hale report is a conservative and highly complacent document which does not measure up to the importance of its subject. It can be used, however, to stimulate discussion on this important question. Some of the evidence given to the Franks Committee, which is sitting in open session, sharply expresses severe criticisms of the organisation, structure and effectiveness of Oxford University—bringing out the contradictions between that university's still largely medieval organisation and the requirements of modern knowledge. At Cambridge a similar movement for reform is under way, though it has not yet made any real impact. The demand is being raised once more for a Royal Commission to reform these universities, which have never shown themselves capable of reforming themselves without external insistence of this kind. This raises the whole question of the social and class role of these two universities.

Technical Colleges

A number of developments affecting the technical colleges have taken place over the past year or two. The upgrading of colleges of advanced technology as full universities has already been noted. In Glasgow the University of Strathclyde has been brought into being, while the other nine C.A.T.s are rapidly preparing for this change—for instance Battersea C.A.T. is to move out of London to form the University of Surrey, the Bristol C.A.T. is to be located in Bath, and so on. The ten C.A.T.s took in a total of nearly 14,000 full-time and sandwich course students in 1964.

The development of the C.A.T.s as universities raises a whole number of important issues concerning conditions of work and general facilities for staff and students, which should now be provided at university level. Here the provision of proper conditions and finance for research is vital. Linked with this is the establishment of effective forms of democratic control by the staff, in place of the authoritarian systems inherited from the past. Here big changes are necessary, as an article in the *Universities Quarterly* by a member of the staff of the Bradford Institute of Technology makes abundantly clear. There are wide variations in the Charters being prepared; some of these being very authoritarian. However, in some institutions the staff is successfully demanding changes. The question of student participation in government is being raised in these discussions.

These changes have given a great impetus to discussions in technical colleges, parallel with those in the new universities, on the whole question of the content of education and the organisation of courses. The particular contribution of these colleges has been the development of the "sandwich course" type of degree, whereby the student spends block periods in industry sandwiched between periods at the college. This type of course is meeting with widespread approval among the staffs of technical colleges, who are making a distinctive contribution to the nature of higher studies in this way. In the problems arising from this attempt to link theory and practice, Marxists also have a distinctive contribution to make.

Secondly, the National Council for Academic Awards, arising from the Robbins recommendation, has now been established. This body, since it will award degrees to students not in universities, is of particular importance to the many technical colleges which run advanced courses at degree level. Its establishment opens the perspective of widened opportunity for university level study.

The personnel of this body has, however, already been sharply criticised in the technical colleges, consisting, as it does, largely of representatives from the universities and industry, with only two from the technical colleges themselves. The Council has first to approve courses for the award of a degree—at the time of writing the only courses so far approved are of the sandwich type. It appears that the policy of the council will be strictly to circumscribe entry on degree courses on the plea that high standards must be maintained. Already a resistance to the strict conditions imposed is developing in the technical colleges; part-time students, for instance, are excluded from working for a degree. While it is clearly important to ensure high standards in the award of the degree the feeling is

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growing that a liberal policy of entry should be permitted, that approved courses should not be limited to the regional colleges, and that the Council should allow technical colleges to work out their own courses and examine them themselves, with the aid of external assessors, as is the practice at universities.

The third development affecting the technical colleges is the setting up of Industrial Training Boards under the Act passed in 1963. Here we have to note that the Labour Government has accepted in its entirety an Act passed by the Tories, one which puts industrial training schemes under the Ministry of Labour rather than Education, and which places the emphasis on training rather than on a wider, educational approach. This raises sharply the whole question of the relations of technical colleges and industry in the education of youth. Are the courses established by the Training Boards to be worked out in terms of the educational interests of young people, or are they to be determined by the often narrow and short-sighted demands of industry? This is becoming an increasingly vital issue, one with which the staffs of technical colleges are deeply concerned.

Teachers' Training Colleges

We may turn now to the teachers' training colleges. Until comparatively recently these colleges tended to be small, isolated institutions with few students —in 1958 140 colleges had a total of 31,000 students —an average of 220 each. The majority of these colleges are under the control of local authorities, but a substantial minority are controlled by the various Churches, particularly the Church of England and Roman Catholics.

The Robbins Committee proposed that these institutions should expand at the same rate as the universities—to 146,000 by 1980. Here also the Labour Party made its most definite statements before the elections, the manifesto stating that "Labour will give to teacher supply a special priority in its first years of office", adding that "the whole future of our education depends on the success of a crash programme for teacher recruitment". Even under capitalism the future requirements for teachers can, at least approximately, be planned, since this depends partly on the birth-rate which is known five years before compulsory school age is reached, and eighteen years before the university entry age. It was on this basis that the Robbins Committee based its projection of students in training colleges over the next fifteen years.

There is already a severe crisis of teacher shortage, and all the indications are that it will get worse in the future, unless the most drastic steps are taken. It is here, then, that big changes should be expected. The pattern of the small, isolated (and inadequate) training college of the past should give place to the development of large institutions, well staffed and provided with good facilities, linked to the universities as part of the overall provision of higher education. There is no reason why certain of these colleges should not form the nuclei of universities in their own right, as was proposed in the Communist Party's evidence to the Robbins Committee.

In spite of the urgency of the situation, and of their own proposals, the Labour Government has not, at the time of writing, taken any effective action to improve the position of these colleges; indeed, as already noted, they have rejected the main Robbins proposal to raise their status. Certain developments are, however, under way, which are worth attention.

The most important of these is the award of a degree for training college students to be known as the B.Ed. Here the Robbins proposals are being implemented by most of the universities. At present the bulk of training college students gain no degree at the end of their three-year course—they are awarded the professional qualification of a teacher's certificate. Beginning in 1965, however, courses leading to the award of a degree to students who successfully complete a four-year course (involving an extra year) will be brought into being. Probably only a small proportion of students will, at first, be able to follow these courses.

In spite of its weaknesses, this is a definite step forward. Nevertheless the proposal raises extremely difficult questions with which both university and training college staffs are now concerned. Will the B.Ed. establish a system of "streaming" in the colleges? Will it lead to two levels of students—those selected to work for the degree, and those rejected? Will the universities insist on courses that are not appropriate for future teachers? What should the degree consist of? Which subjects should be included and which excluded? Will the teaching all be done in the colleges, or will some be undertaken at the universities? And, if degree work is to be undertaken in the colleges, what about the provision of proper facilities, in particular libraries, scientific equipment and so on? These at present are nowhere near university standard. Finally the whole question of evolving forms of more democratic government, of the control by the staff over courses and examinations, is raised again in a new form. All these questions are now being widely discussed, and decisions made of great importance for the future of the students and staff concerned. Here also Marxists should have a particular contribution to make, while the Communist Party as such must make its policy clear among both staff and students.

Finally we should note one further change that

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has taken place since the Robbins Report was published. The University Grants Committee, which distributes funds to the universities, used to come directly under the aegis of the Treasury and not of the Minister of Education. It has now been transferred to the Department of Education and Science, while Lord Bowden, until recently Principal of the Manchester College of Science and Technology, is responsible for this whole field under the Minister (Crosland). This may prove to be an important change. It makes open the link between the universities and the state but may lead to more public discussion of university policy.

Communist Party Policy

So much for the present position. Within the political context described at the start of this article, important developments are taking place and decisions made; there is, in fact, a good deal going on in an area that, throughout the 'fifties, was somewhat stagnant and withdrawn. In this situation, the Communist Party must be in a position to fight for a clear and definite policy. It is now four years since the evidence to the Robbins Committee was drawn up. What, then, should be the general outline of such a policy?[2]

The Communist Party welcomed the Robbins Report, regarding it as a progressive document. It was the first report in the history of this country to examine the situation in higher education as a whole, putting forward proposals covering universities, technical colleges and training colleges, which, if implemented, would mark a considerable step towards the unification and democratisation of the system. Certainly there were points of criticism, particularly in relation to technical education. But overall this was a positive report, particularly welcome in its firm rebuttal of the theory of a strictly limited "pool of ability".

That this was a correct assessment has been underlined by the opposition the report has aroused among reactionary circles. *The Times* devoted three successive leaders to an attack on its proposals shortly after it was issued. After the election euphoria on the part of the Tories had evaporated, this opposition found increasing expression, normally on the stale grounds that "more means worse". "The indiscriminate expansion of universities to satisfy the demand for higher education," said Sir John Lockwood, Master of Birkbeck College, in December, in a typical pronouncement of this kind, "has an insidious capacity to damage the currency value of education." Views of this kind are widely propagated. The report, however, contained material effectively countering such charges.

But it is increasingly clear that the Robbins estimates of future numbers in higher education, accepted by succeeding Governments, are *far too conservative*. The committee proposed that the 185,000 students in full-time higher education in 1962-63 should be increased to 558,000 in 1980.[3] It is likely that this figure should be doubled. The reasons are as follows.

The Robbins Committee held that it was impossible to make any estimate of the future social demand for people with higher education (except in the case of teachers) on the grounds that these had in the past always proved wrong. Such estimates, they held, were in fact impossible to make, since neither the growth of the economy, nor the technological changes of the future could be foreseen. They therefore based their projections on estimates of the future *demand* for places at universities, taking as their criterion the principle that everyone qualified for a place who wished to take it up should be able to do so. Their estimates, therefore, were based on certain assumptions as to the likely changes in the demand for places.

Now two points can be made about these estimates. The first is that the overall estimate is too low (the committee themselves pointed out that they were conservative). In particular the reorganisation of secondary education now taking place all over the country will certainly lead to many more young people becoming qualified than was estimated by Robbins—this is a new factor that has begun to operate only after the report was drawn up.

Equal Opportunity and Social Need

Secondly, as has been pointed out by several critics (for instance Jean Floud in an article in *Forum*, Vol. 6, No. 3), the criterion of demand is the most conservative assumption as compared with two others which might have been used; that of "equality of opportunity", and that of manpower requirements in an expanding economy. Suppose we take the criterion of equality of opportunity. In the Robbins Report (particularly Appendix 2B) and elsewhere an enormous weight of evidence has been compiled showing the extent to which the scales are weighted against the working-class child throughout his education. We know that 75 per cent of university students, for instance, come from the professional and middle classes, and only 25 per cent from the numerically much greater manual working class.

This bias against the working-class child operates

[2] The section that follows is based on discussions held by the Higher Education Committee of the Communist Party, which was set up early in 1964.

[3] 346,000 in universities, 146,000 in training colleges, 66,000 in technical colleges.

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throughout the school system, through streaming, selection and in many other ways. As a result a very large number of talented young people never even get near the university. The committee could have proposed a policy to combat this continuous discrimination, "an active policy", as Jean Floud puts it, "of mobilising talent". Had they done so their estimates of future numbers would inevitably have been far greater. They would at the same time have had to produce a charter of educational advance, covering education as a whole.

"Equality of opportunity" would not only mean the abolition of streaming and selection. It would also mean a social policy consciously designed to increase opportunities for the working class—in fact a class policy. This perhaps could hardly be expected from the Robbins Committee. It should form the essential basis, however, of the policy of the Communist Party and of all working-class and progressive organisations.

The second criterion the committee might have used, and indeed was expected to use, was that of the social demand for educated personnel. In its evidence to the committee the Communist Party gave this priority. Future demands must be estimated, it was said, from two standpoints: "first, from that of industry and the needs of society, and second, from that of the growing demands by young people which are certain to be made in the future". This approach, however, was deliberately rejected by Robbins.

Here, the expansion of higher education ties in with the whole question of scientific and technological advance, with the modernisation of industry, with the concept of planning and economic growth, as well as with the planned provision of essential services—educational, medical, cultural and so on. Instead of the *laissez-faire* policy of the present, where expansion is theoretically linked to demand (though as we have seen these demands are nowhere near being met even now), what is necessary is a planned development of higher education which will "mesh" with economic and social planning. But here we come up against a contradiction. In capitalist society such planning is impossible—as the report points out, where it has been attempted it has failed.

Such planning, to be effective, requires the socialist organisation of industry. It was this aspect of planning in higher education that so powerfully attracted Lord Bowden on his visit to the Soviet Union in 1964. It is this aspect that is of vital importance if we are to achieve a level of scientific and technological advance in line both with the needs and the possibilities of today.

Taking the existing set-up in industry as the base, together with the position in the social services, utilising modern planning techniques, it should be possible to estimate future requirements in terms of the numbers of scientists, technologists, teachers, doctors, architects, local government officials—the list could be extended indefinitely. This, of course, is the method used to plan developments in the socialist countries where, in higher education, plans are consistently made for a period of ten years ahead. Naturally modifications have to be made from time to time. But the success of the system of higher education in the Soviet Union, for instance, shows that such planning can be highly effective.

The criterion of social demand, together with that of equality of opportunity (the *mobilisation* of talent), should form the basis of all planning in higher education. There can be no doubt that an approach of this kind could make clear the need, and the possibility, for a great expansion in this field, far above the Robbins estimates. There could be no clearer indication of the basic Marxist tenet that technological development insistently *requires* socialism for its full development in the service of man.

A Radical Expansion

The key issue, then, on which the Communist Party should fight, is that of a radical expansion of higher education beyond the Robbins targets; based on the dual criteria of manpower requirements on the one hand, and equality of opportunity on the other. This involves a consistent policy throughout the whole field of education, one designed to overcome the sharp class obstacles now preventing the rich talents of working-class youth from coming to full fruition. The Robbins Committee themselves give figures showing that, over the last three decades, the proportion of working-class students in universities has not changed, even though the total numbers in higher education have more than doubled. It is time that there was a genuine determination to force a change.

Of what order the targets should be over the coming period needs working out; but it is clear enough that they imply a continuous and rapid expansion of existing universities and C.A.T.s, as well as the development of new universities from the larger technical colleges and teachers training colleges, along the lines set out in detail in the Communist Party evidence to the committee. A campaign should also be launched for the full implementation of the Robbins proposals linking the training colleges with the universities, as well as for a radical educational advance in the primary and secondary schools.

Basically these are the means by which the present shortage of students in science and technology can be overcome, though this is also a reflex of present

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methods of selection and degree of specialisation in the secondary schools, as well as of the conditions which science graduates face in industry. All these and other factors lie behind the failure to recruit sufficient students in these fields—a failure which, if it continues, could be disastrous.

The other main aspects of Communist policy follow from points already made either in this article, or in the evidence to Robbins. Chief among these are the demand for a National Council of Higher Education to ensure democratic control and effective planning over the whole field, together with Regional Councils to allow decentralisation. The urgent requirement for common entrance qualifications must once more be stressed, especially after the experience of last summer when many potential students could not be placed because of the anarchic conditions that operated. Indeed it is now clear that the Universities Central Council for Admissions (U.C.C.A.) must be developed as a unified admissions body for higher education, having greater powers than at present, and including both Oxford and Cambridge. As regards the latter universities, their separatism can no longer be tolerated. Drastic steps must be taken to ensure that these universities are effectively reformed and brought into relation with the system of higher education as a whole. Above all this means the end of the autonomy of the individual colleges.

To improve the conditions of students support should be given to their own campaign for the improvement of grants and especially for the abolition of the means test. The raising of salaries of the teaching staff in all institutions of higher education is also immediately necessary. In particular an effective negotiating machinery should be set up covering the staff of universities and C.A.T.s.

The need to open up opportunities for part-time study for a degree also needs to be stressed. Very many people would undertake study of this kind if it were possible. The Soviet Union has much to teach us here. The situation could be eased if the Council for National Academic Awards permitted part-time study for its degrees. Existing universities and a "University of the Air" could play a large part here.

Finally the fight to democratise all institutions of higher education needs to be carried on, especially in the new university type institutions, but also in the older universities. At the same time, as already suggested, Communists should make an effective contribution to the reform of the content of education and of teaching methods.

Nothing has been said about the organisation and finance of research, again a vital question. Certain changes carried through by the Labour Government have affected the position here. This is an important topic that needs further discussion and separate treatment.

It is clear enough that a critical situation has been reached in the field of higher education. This is a matter which closely affects the Labour movement as a whole. In its evidence to the Robbins Committee the Communist Party put forward a comprehensive policy, one which made a considerable impact. The situation is now even more critical than it was four years ago, while at the same time the conditions cry out for effective leadership. The policy outlined in this article will, it is hoped, give the basis for such activity.

The Case for Direction of Industry to Scotland

Gordon McLennan and Bob McIlhone

THE prolonged neglect of economic development in Scotland has created such a deep sense of frustration that even the slightest ray of hope is treated in certain circles as if it were a major advance. There has even been the claim that Scotland is undergoing "a second industrial revolution". The truth is, of course, that this description of the stage reached in Scotland's economic development is the child of wishful thinking.

All the plans and promises, the evasions and cajolery on the part of industrialists and governments alike, have failed to shift the hard core of unemployment that has disfigured the Scottish

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scene since the end of the first world war. Forty-six years of chronic unemployment have dulled Scottish ears to the term "full employment".

Hence the mounting insistence that the Government adopt more drastic measures not only to establish new industries that will provide jobs, but also to reinforce the basic capital goods industries which must continue to be an important sector of Scotland's economy.

Capitalism's Legacy

Scotland is a standing memorial to the ugly scramble for markets and profits that went on in the sacred name of Free Trade in the era of industrial expansion during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The industrial and shipping magnates rode high on the wave of advancing capitalism. Their frantic chase for the highest profit left a record of unplanned towns and cities, over-crowded, hideous slums, and dreary, poverty-stricken villages. The clearing of the Highlands and Islands made available a large supply of cheap labour, keeping wage levels low and freeing more capital for export and the exploitation of the colonies. Scotland's basic industries of shipbuilding, marine engineering, coal mining, textiles, iron and steel-making, locomotive construction, became known throughout the world for the skill of the tradesmen and the quality of the products.

Before the first world war, Scotland, with 10 per cent of the population of Britain, produced 14.8 per cent of the coal, 20.6 per cent of the steel and 33 per cent of the shipbuilding in the British Isles. Yet, with this predominance in heavy, capital goods industries, Scotland had a much lower rate of unemployment than England. (In London the rate was 8.7 per cent; in Scotland 1.8 per cent.) Here is the answer to those who today say that the reason for Scotland's high rate of unemployment lies in the fact that we have a disproportionate amount of heavy industry. In 1913, when we had a greater proportion of heavy industry relative to the rest of the U.K. than we have today, we had a far lower rate of unemployment than other parts of Britain.

Scotland's high rate of unemployment is not the result of over-dependence on heavy industry. We have to look for the cause elsewhere—in the nature and purpose of monopoly capitalism.

A Lop-Sided Economy

The end of Britain's monopoly of world trade came with the emergence of powerful competitors before the commencement of the first world war. Scotland's primary industries, based largely on the export trade, were hit severely and have felt the impact ever since. Forty-two million tons of coal were being mined in 1913; by 1929 coal output had dropped to 34 million tons, and in 1933 to 29 million tons. Forty thousand miners lost their jobs in the years between 1925 and 1936. In shipbuilding, Scottish production fell from an average launching of 500,000 tons between 1920 and 1930, to 226,000 tons in 1930-34. In 1936 steel production was only one-third of the 1913 level with half of the labour force (15,000 out of 30,000) on the labour exchange.

None of the "compensating" new industries existed in Scotland to cushion the effect of the breakdown in trade and absorb the unemployment. The production of motor cars and motor vehicles, electrical apparatus, cycles, and the new products for mass consumption, were not for Scotland. The fifth Census of Production in 1935 noted that Scotland's electrical industry had 36 factories employing 3,299 workers, out of 854 factories with 247,948 workers in the United Kingdom. That year, this industry had an output of £107 million, of which Scotland's share was £1,260,000 or just over 1 per cent.

In the motor and cycle trades in 1935 there were 835 firms employing 224,000 workers in the United Kingdom, of which Scotland had 38 factories employing 3,572 workers, i.e. 1½ per cent. Scotland would have been justified in claiming, according to population and number of insured workers, 10 per cent of the jobs in these industries. This would have given us, even in the grim 1930's, 40,000 extra jobs for the skilled workers who had been thrown on the scrap-heap by monopoly capitalism.

The concentration of light industries south of the border was the consciously directed policy of big business. Having brought the traditional, basic capital goods industries in Scotland to the point of ruin and put hundreds of thousands of skilled workers on to the dole, they destroyed a potential market for the new products of mass consumption. The mass markets lay south, the highest profit lay south, so south too went the investments.

Thus arose the so-called "imbalance" in the Scottish economy, heavy industry weighted excessively against light, a phenomenon that has been with us for half a century and which has come to be accepted by our "learned" economists almost as an immutable economic law, inevitable and peculiar to Scotland.

A Development Area!

Scotland's unemployment problem gained some respite during the second world war. But even this was small in scope, it lasted only as long as

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the war itself and even then our resources were not fully mobilised. Between 1941 and 1944, only 27 new industrial establishments out of the 600 authorised, came to Scotland. No sooner was the war over than the rot again set in. Typical of things to come was the fierce battle waged by shop stewards at Rolls Royce (Hillington), Blackburn Aircraft Factory in Dumbarton and elsewhere, to keep their factories employing the maximum number of workers. These struggles were only partially successful, and Scotland found little advantage in diversification of its industry as a result of wartime developments.

Within a year of the end of the war unemployment grew rapidly. From 28,236 in August 1945, it jumped to 73,762 in December 1946—21 per cent of the British total. There had been no new deal for Scotland's war workers—only a raw deal for Scotland. "Already in the first few months of peace and reconversion, it seems that Scotland is drifting back once more to become a distressed area," wrote John Gollan that year in the pamphlet *Scotland Needs 150,000 New Jobs*. The Labour Government, indeed, named Scotland in 1945, not a distressed area, but in the new terminology a Development Area, and Sir Stafford Cripps said that Scotland would require 143,000 new jobs.

At no time since then have new jobs been provided in sufficient numbers to bring Scottish unemployment down to the British average even though the entire period has been one of mass emigration from our country. If almost half a million people had not left Scotland since 1945, we would today have five or six times the present level of unemployment. Between 1947 and 1957 there were always 50,000 to 70,000 workers unemployed in Scotland, but in 1958 the number jumped to over 81,000 and by 1963 the monthly average had reached the record post war figure of 104,826.

Between 1951 and 1963, the number of males in employment in Scotland *decreased* by 33,000 while there was an *increase* of almost one million in the rest of Britain. In the same period, female employment increased only by 48,000 as against an increase of 989,000 elsewhere in the U.K. It was Scotland's basic industries which suffered most severely in this black period. In coal-mining 23,000 jobs were lost, and there were 15,000 fewer jobs in shipbuilding, 12,000 in iron and steel and 10,000 in railway transport.

In 1964 there was a drop in unemployment to a monthly average of 80,298 and a number of major new developments were completed or started. It is on these improvements (!) on the grim year of 1963 that the over-optimistic forecasts of today are based, but satisfaction with the relative improvement should not blind us to the gigantic nature of the basic problem which still exists.

New Developments

The fight waged by the shop stewards in 1945-46 for the retention of the jobs of the men they represented has been carried forward since then by the Scottish Trades Union Congress and its affiliated organisations. Largely as a result of their endeavours some important new developments have taken place recently in Scotland and others are projected.

The opening of the Forth Road Bridge can be of first rate importance in the economic development of Fife and the East of Scotland. The B.M.C., Pressed Steel and Rootes factories at Bathgate and Linwood have raised the numbers employed on motor vehicle production from under 7,000 in 1961 to some 20,000 today. Two new coal-fired power stations are under construction in Fife and East Lothian assuring jobs to thousands of miners. The nuclear power station at Hunterston on the west coast, said to be the biggest in the world, was officially opened last year, and the breeder-reactor station at Dounreay has brought employment and increased population to the North of Scotland. Lanarkshire has the new steel strip mill at Motherwell; John Brown's of Clydebank have won the contract for the new Cunarder, and other shipyards have also received good orders. A new graving dock is in operation at Greenock and the first stage of the Tay Road Bridge is complete.

Perhaps the most significant of all the new projects is the construction of the pulp mill at Annat, near Fort William. When in production this will be a self-contained unit closely bound up with the soil of Scotland, from the raw material to the finished product. A £22 million undertaking, the pulp-mill will not only give permanent employment to 4,000 workers, but will also bring into play the results of years of hard work by the Forestry Commission, since it will require each day almost 1,500 tons of home-grown soft and hard wood, a daily cutting of 17,000 trees from a radius of 150 miles. Incidentally, when in production the pulp mill will cut the import bill for timber by £8 million.

All these are welcome developments *but they are not sufficient to secure the economic future of Scotland*.

Negative Factors

Unless a tremendous battle is waged by the Scottish trade union movement the loss of jobs

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will continue in the basic industries of our country.

The coal-fired power stations being built in East Lothian and Fife will secure several thousand miners' jobs but they will not, of themselves, prevent a further sharp reduction in the labour force in coal-mining in Scotland. With increased mechanisation and concentration of production in the major pits there could still be a loss of 10,000 to 15,000 jobs in the Scottish coalfields in the next five years if, as is being suggested, the Scottish allocation of national coal output drops below 15 million tons.

Thousands of jobs will also be lost on the railways in Scotland if present plans are implemented. Not only will stations be closed and hundreds of miles of railway track abandoned as a result of the Beeching proposals, but road transport is taking an increasing amount of freight. The end of steam traction in the Scottish region of British Railways also threatens thousands of jobs. Plans drawn up by the management estimate that staffing requirements for diesel traction as against steam traction could mean a reduction of 48 per cent in supervisory and clerical staff, 21.5 per cent in foot-plate staff and 65 per cent in local shed staff.

Nor should the £170 million order book of the major Clyde shipyards create a false feeling that the long-term prospects for shipbuilding have radically improved. The labour force in Clyde yards today is 30 per cent down on 1960 and many of the skilled men driven out of the industry by insecurity may never return to it. Acute shortage of skilled labour, especially in the finishing trades, is already creating problems for Scottish shipbuilders, and valuable orders could be lost as a result. Scotland's yards launched nearly 400,000 tons of shipping last year, 35 per cent of the British total and about 140,000 tons higher than 1963. But 1965 is unlikely to be as good as 1964, which was an especially good year for British shipbuilding mainly because the Government's £75 million credit scheme helped to stimulate the orders placed in 1963 for 1½ million tons of shipping. With the ending of the credit scheme the 1964 orders have fallen to 961,000 tons.

The motor car industry has also failed to live up to expectations both in the numbers employed directly and in the continuing absence of ancillary component factories. Short time working at the Linwood factories of Rootes and Pressed Steel during the winter months was followed in March by a major redundancy at Pressed Steel. Rootes are working at less than half capacity and have vast stocks of the Hillman Imp parked in fields adjoining the factory. Even if orders improve in the spring these will be taken from stock and will not mean greater activity on the factory floor. No wonder that Mr. James Jack, General Secretary of the Scottish Trades Union Congress, described the pay-off as "a blow, which to some extent, deflates our hopes for the future".

In the steel industry, which enjoyed boom conditions during 1964 and increased the Scottish labour force by 3,400 workers, the prospects for 1965 do not indicate that many more workers will be required.

These facts in relation to coal-mining, railways, shipbuilding and steel, and the problems arising in the motor car industry, have to be taken alongside the encouraging and positive features of the Scottish economic scene, if a balanced estimate is to be made of our future prospects. The total picture has then to be viewed relative to what is needed to cure the chronic ills that we have suffered from for far too long.

New Jobs Needed

The Secretary of State for Scotland, Mr. Wm. Ross, announced in February that emigration from Scotland in 1964 had reached a post-war record figure of 41,000. The same month's unemployment rate was 75,832 (3.6 per cent as against 1.6 per cent for the U.K.). Any estimate of the new jobs needed in Scotland must be based, *as a short term absolute minimum,* on reducing Scottish unemployment to the U.K. average, and cutting the net migration loss to a maximum of 10,000 per year by 1970.

To achieve these minimum aims we need 100,000 new jobs in the next five years *provided that not a single one of existing jobs is lost in the same period.*

In an article in the *Scotsman* on January 21st, 1965, Mr. George Middleton, Chairman of the Scottish Board for Industry, estimated that 100,000 new jobs had come to Scotland since the end of the war. It is a measure of the gigantic nature of the task now confronting Scotland, that in order to reach the modest minimum aims outlined above, we must secure in the next five years the same number of jobs acquired in the last twenty.

It will only be accomplished on the following two-fold basis: (1) Expansion of our basic industries; (2) Direction of new industry into Scotland.

Expansion of the Basic Industries

The Communist Party has never accepted, and never will accept, the proposition that our basic industries are dying and that nothing can be done

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about it. It is certainly true that coal-mining, shipbuilding and railways are affected by great technological changes, and in the case of coal, other energy-fuels are now available. But these are not the major reasons for these industries being drastically run down. As with the chronic half-century "imbalance" of Scottish industry the reason can be found in the development and search for maximum profit of monopoly capitalism.

Must coal production go down as the oil monopolies, with the connivance of the Government, grab more and more of the market for imported oil and natural gas? It is not necessary. In a planned system of society, with advancing production and living standards, one source of power need not be the enemy of the other. In the February 1965 issue of *Labour Monthly*, the editor, Mr. R. Palme Dutt, drew attention to the fact that in the Soviet Union the level of coal production in 1913 was 29 million tons and by 1950 it had increased to 261 million tons. In that year oil production was 38 million tons. By 1964 oil production had shot up to 223 million tons *but coal production had simultaneously leaped to 551 million tons!* We do not have a planned socialist economy, nor do we have an average annual increase in industrial output of 10.1 per cent as in the Soviet Union, but a Labour Government can and must develop a national fuel policy in which coal has a minimum stake of 200 million tons. Then on the basis of a planned expansion of the economy between now and 1970 increased targets for coal production are feasible. In such circumstances it is possible to foresee Scottish coal production being boosted to 20 million tons in the next five years without one miner losing his job.

The railways are also falling victim to the oil monopolies in particular, as well as the anti-social greed of the monopolies in general. The railways can be effectively and efficiently modernised by electrification, using the coal resources of Britain, instead of diesel fuel. Our inadequate roads are at present choked by long-distance lorries belching poisonous diesel fumes. Yet the traffic on the roads increases daily. Ten years ago in Scotland an equal amount of freight was carried by road and rail. Today the relative percentages are: Road 70 per cent — Rail 30 per cent. There are also millions of motor cars on the roads carrying passengers who would far rather travel by cheap public transport if it were available. More and more traffic, passengers and freight must be shifted from road to rail. By this decisive stroke the terrible toll of road casualties would be cut, thousands of railwaymen's jobs saved, the possibility of economic development in the Highlands and Borders made real, our dependence on foreign fuel minimised and our national fuel resources given a new lease of life. The Labour Government can strike a major blow for the future of Scotland by producing an integrated transport policy that plans for an expansion of rail, road, sea, canal and air transport and rejects the pernicious theories of Dr. Beeching.

World shipbuilding tonnage launched in 1964 was 10,263,803 tons, 1,725,290 tons more than 1963, but Japan increased its output by 1,717,837 tons and as a result won 99½ per cent of the world increase. Britain launched 10 per cent of the world tonnage in 1964, an increase of 114,927 tons on 1963, but a drastic fall from our 28 per cent of world launchings in 1955. The issue for British shipbuilding and its Scottish 35 per cent is to win a much higher percentage of world launchings and at the same time win new orders from British owners. This does not mean that we must enter into cut-throat competition with Japanese workers with consequent smashing of shipbuilding workers' hard-won conditions and agreements. The important thing is decisive action by the Government, and as a first step it could stop British shipowners ordering from foreign yards. The recent announcement by the P. & O. line that they were ordering at a cost of £12 million, four 62,000 ton bulk carriers, three to be built in Japan and only one in the United Kingdom, brought the following sharp comment from Ted Hill, President of the Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers.

> "These ships, like many others built abroad will be paid for in British currency and having regard to our immediate balance of payment difficulties and the need to balance our export-import programme in the future, this action cannot be justified."

In addition to more orders from British owners we can also win many orders from the Socialist countries and the newly emergent countries of Africa and Asia. The £5 million order from Rumania and Czechoslovakia announced on February 22nd by English shipbuilding firms, and recent orders from China and Ghana show the new possibilities. The Government needs also to take careful note of the meteoric progress of the Japanese shipbuilding industry, which receives massive financial support from its Government, including special eight-year loans of up to 80 per cent of purchase price for all ships for export. Action along these lines, in conjunction with a long-term policy of scrap-and-build in relation to our merchant fleet, would ensure this side of socialist nationalisation of shipbuilding, with no

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further deterioration of employment prospects in Scottish yards.

The proposals outlined above for coal, railways and shipbuilding would improve the prospects for steel and all other sections of capital goods industries in Scotland, but alongside these we must have new, light, science-based industries employing a much larger section of the Scottish working people than they do today.

Direction of New Industry

The Scottish Trades Union Congress first demanded direction of industry to Scotland in a resolution passed at its 1935 Congress, and the preliminary agenda for this year's Congress has similar resolutions from the United Patternmakers Association and the Kirkcaldy Trades Council. On this, the thirtieth anniversary of the first resolution on this subject, it is to be hoped that the delegates will not tolerate further delay from Government Ministers. There should be no misunderstanding in anyone's mind—this is the crucial issue for Scotland's economy and the solution of our chronic unemployment problem. The official jargon of rejection in response to the demands for direction of industry should be exposed for what it is: lack of concern or lack of knowledge of Scotland's needs. We are sick of hearing Tory Government Ministers reading their civil servant inspired handouts, and we don't want to hear them from Labour Government Ministers.

> "The Government has no power to direct industry to one particular place."
>
> "Even if the Government had these powers this would not ensure a new flow of industry to Scotland because there must first be industrial development taking place requiring new premises before any kind of direction can be applied to it."
>
> "The direction of industry is quite impractical in a free and democratic society in peacetime."
>
> "The tough use of Industrial Development Certificates is sufficient to deal with the problem."

George Middleton, when he was Secretary of the S.T.U.C., blew this latter proposition sky-high when he cited the case of Nylon-Spinners who rejected Aberdeen as the site of a £10 million project and settled in Rochester by using an escape clause in the regulations. As Middleton said at the time—"It was just like tax-evasion". The present emigration and unemployment figures show that the "tough use of Industrial Development Certificates" hasn't succeeded.

Nor should anyone be bamboozled by the ". . . impractical in a free and democratic society" gambit. British Governments have taken emergency action involving compulsion for working people when their capitalist system was in danger. They can be forced to take similar action against capitalists when workers' jobs and the security and well being of their families are endangered.

The famous pre-war rescue operation in the dust-bowl of America by the Tennessee Valley Authority was initiated by the U.S. Government in an area many times the size of Scotland and involving a similar number of people. It is still today a U.S. Government-supported project. In post-war years a similar operation was launched on the impoverished Southern half of Italy by the Italian Government, embracing a large-scale programme of development, land reform, a plan of public works and in 1957 a new law to enforce a greater concentration of investments in that region of Italy.

If the capitalist Governments of the United States and Italy can intervene in this way to deal with a major economic problem involving a region of their country so too can a British Labour Government. The establishment of the Highland Development Board and the Scottish Economic Planning Council do not make invalid the demand for direction of industry. Both of these bodies are positive steps in the right direction but fall short of what is needed. The Economic Planning Council is only an advisory body and the Highland Development Board has limited powers and a tiny allocation of money with which to tackle its monumental task. If we are not to go on witnessing the tragedy of Scotland's life-blood being drained away by emigration, and the continued imposition on our country of double the national average unemployment figure, then the Scottish Trades Union Congress needs to take everything else it is doing to improve Scotland's economy to its logical conclusion, by launching a new fight for Government direction of industry to our country.

In the National Interest

In fighting for a real future for Scotland based on the planned development over the whole of our country of our natural and industrial resources, we have no intention of indulging in an economic throat-cutting competition with Northern Ireland, the North-East Coast, Merseyside, the Midlands, South-East England or the Home Counties.

Scotland is not the only part of Britain whose economic and social plight demands Government intervention and assistance. The lopsided development of Britain's economy and accelerated

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population drift to the South is as dangerous to the workers in the South as it is to those living in Scotland, the North-East Coast, Merseyside or Northern Ireland. Regional plans as part of the total national plan are urgently necessary and must be produced without delay. But speed is not the only condition for these plans or indeed the main one. The main condition is that Britain as a whole and all the regions of Britain must be planned in the interests of the working people of the country so that their economic and social conditions are improved, their leisure and cultural facilities extended and their future prospects guaranteed.

This can only be done if the grip of the great monopolies on Britain is broken and their power severely restricted. This is the decisive question. Shall our country be run in the interests of super-profits for Shell-Mex, B.P., I.C.I., and the other great monopolies or in the interests of the people? The answer of the Communist Party is clear--Britain belongs to the people, not the monopolies--and it is on this foundation that we rest our case for direction of industry to Scotland.

Historical Materialist Theory of Knowledge

Alfred Sohn-Rethel

> "It is not the consciousness of men which determines their being, but on the contrary it is their social existence which determines their consciousness."
>
> "Consciousness is therefore from the very beginning a social product and remains so as long as men exist at all."

TAKING these statements of Marx as a guide we find it useful for purposes of the theory of knowledge to distinguish three major epochs of social development to which correspond three important stages in the emergence of knowledge:

1. Tribal society (primitive communism).
2. Early class society (Bronze Age civilisations).
3. Commodity production (ancient and modern).

The corresponding stages of knowledge are:

1. Language and consciousness.
2. Number and script.
3. Conceptual reasoning.

The contribution which I wish to make in this article relates to the third stage, but in order to see our problem in its historical perspective we must cast a glance, if ever so briefly, on the previous stages.

1. Language and Consciousness

> "Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness as it exists for other men and for that reason is really beginning to exist for me personally as well; for language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of co-operation (*Verkehr*) with other men."

This Marxian insight, characteristic of his genius, has been proved correct by the work of I. P. Pavlov on conditioned reflexes which has clarified the nature of speech. Speech, the use of words, Pavlov understands as "secondary signalling system" involving abstraction and thought. Basing himself on these results, George Thomson, in the opening chapter of his book *The First Philosophers*,[1] has undertaken to reconstruct the emergence of human consciousness in history. He argues convincingly that consciousness evolves as an outcome of "collective labour, involving tools and speech" (l.c. p. 34). "The three characteristics we have distinguished—tools, speech, co-operation—are parts of a single process, the labour of production. This process is distinctively human, and its organising unit is society." (Ib. p. 35.)

Some distinctive features of the consciousness throughout the periods of the first stage are: (a) Consciousness here is entirely practical; it is in the nature of skill which we would describe as knowledge of how to do things as distinct from the knowledge of how to explain them. Only to the latter do we, for our special purposes, reserve the name of "scientific". (b) The individual cannot conceive of his existence outside his social group, he does not face nature as an individual, on the contrary, his conception of nature bears essential features of the

[1] Lawrence & Wishart, 1955—as Vol. II of his *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*.

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organisation of his group. (c) "So long as labour remained collective, its process was necessarily incomprehensible to the individual participants" (G. Th., l.c. p. 46). In fact, to the participants the process was indistinguishable from magic, "we may say that magic originated in the labour process as its subjective aspect" (ib.).

2. Number and Script

Economically primitive communism was based on common ownership of the means of production at a level of productivity so low that it hardly sufficed for subsistence. Only at the end, in the neolithic epoch, did productivity begin permanently to rise above subsistence level, thereby making social exploitation possible. Aided by increasing division of labour and the corresponding commodity exchange, the introduction of metallurgy (copper and bronze) together with centrally organised irrigation in the alluvial valleys of the Nile, Euphrates, Indus, and Hoang-Ho laid the economic foundation to the class society of the Bronze Age civilisations.

The vastly increased surplus product of the village communities[2] is appropriated—collected, stored, and disposed of—by a non-producing class of landlords and priests organised under a kingship. This surplus product serves to pay for metal and other materials traded from abroad, to provide the keep of specialised metalworkers and other urban craftsmen whose (luxury-) product is again appropriated by the ruling class, and to feed soldiers and masses of conscript labourers occupied on useful and sacred constructions. With the chief exception of foreign trade which is in the form of exchange, appropriation by the ruling class is one-sided, tributary appropriation in a social system of "direct lordship and bondage", to use a Marxian term.[3]

All the characteristic mental achievements of this stage are made by the agents of this kind of appropriation, of whom the only example within our historical experience are the mandarins of Imperial China and their subalterns. Foremost among these achievements was: the working out of counting systems, the establishment of standard measures, the calculation of storage and building volumes, the astronomy and calendar of the floods, the geometry of the redistribution of the fields after the floods for tax re-allocation, the preservation (mummification) of things stored, and last but not least, record keeping and writing. These are achievements of mental work divided from productive labour, even if not yet severed from manual activity altogether. The mental techniques evolved at this stage are associated, not with the naming of things, but with written (man-made) signs for things named, arithmetical or verbal symbols. Although many of these techniques are absorbed and carried on at the next stage, they do not in themselves imply or presuppose a scientific mode of thinking. The arithmetic of the Egyptians, for instance, shows no sign of free mathematical reasoning; the nature of their geometry seems indicated by the professional name of the geometers which Herodotus translates by a word meaning "rope-fasteners"; and their astronomy did not oust mythology. Indeed, the ideological leaders were everywhere priests, not philosophers. These only belong to the third stage.

3. *Conceptual Reasoning*

(a) Commodity production and the rise of philosophy

Philosophical thought emerges in ancient Greece, first in the early Ionian, still semi-mythological cosmologies of the sixth century, and then around 500 B.C. with the first philosophers in the strict sense, i.e., Pythagoras, Heraclitus, and Parmenides. Philosophical and conceptual reasoning may be regarded as an attribute of civilisation as understood by Engels. "Civilisation is . . . the stage of development in society at which the division of labour, the exchange between individuals arising from it, and the commodity production which combines them both, come to their full growth and revolutionise the whole of previous society."[4] And again more explicitly and in greater detail: "The stage of commodity production with which civilisation begins is distinguished economically by the introduction of (1) metal money, and with it money capital, interest and usury; (2) merchants, as the class of intermediaries between the producers; (3) private ownership of land, and the mortgage system; (4) slave labour as the dominant form of production."[5] The conclusions reached by Engels in this study regarding the effects of commodity production and money economy upon social life have in recent years been brought an essential step forward by George Thomson who in the book already quoted shows in a closely argued manner that the growth of commodity production is also at the root of the rise of

[2] With their "primitive communal relations of production . . . converted into tributary relations, but without involving any more radical change" (G. Thomson, l.c. p. 178).

[3] For a clear description of these Bronze Age economies see the books of Gordon Childe, *What Happened in History* (Pelican) and *Man Makes Himself* (Thinkers' Library, 87), and particularly his elucidating short article in *Modern Quarterly*, Vol. 1, 2 (March 1946) on "The Social Implication of the Three 'Ages' in Archaeological Classification".

[4] *Origin of the Family*, etc., p. 198.

[5] Ib., p. 201.

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philosophy. He sums up his conclusion in these words:

> "In *Capital* Marx gave the first scientific analysis of those mysterious things called commodities. A commodity is a material object, but it only becomes a commodity by virtue of its social relations to other commodities. Its existence *qua* commodity is a purely abstract reality. It is at the same time . . . the hall-mark of civilisation. . . . Hence, civilised thought has been dominated from the earliest times down to the present day by what Marx called the fetishism of commodities, that is, the false consciousness generated by the social relations of commodity production. In early Greek philosophy we see this 'false consciousness' gradually emerging and imposing on the world categories of thought derived from commodity production, as though these categories belonged, not to society, but to nature."[6]

This conclusion seems to raise an important question.

(b) Apparent Incompatibility of Two Materialistic Views

How does the derivation of basic categories of thought from commodity production, as suggested by G. Thomson, fit in with the accepted theory of knowledge of dialectical materialism? The categories in question are concepts like substance, being, magnitude, abstract time and space, uniform movement, etc., and therefore not dissimilar to the "principles of being" under discussion in the *Anti-Dühring* where Engels argues:

> "But whence does thought obtain these principles? From itself? No, . . . the realm of pure thought is limited to logical schemata . . .; but what we are dealing with here are forms of being, of the external world, and these forms can never be created and derived by thought out of itself, but only from the external world. But with this the whole relationship is inverted: the principles are not the starting point of the investigation, but its final result; they are not applied to Nature and human history, but abstracted from them; it is not Nature and the realm of humanity which conform to these principles, but the principles are only valid in so far as they are in conformity with Nature and history. That is the only materialistic conception of the matter and Herr Dühring's contrary conception is idealistic."[7]

This standpoint of Engels was further developed by Lenin and elaborated as "theory of reflection".[8]

G. Thomson's theory is certainly not idealistic since it derives the categories of thought, not from sources in the mind, but from the external reality of commodity production, which belong to man's "social existence".

Engels, on the other hand, speaks of the "external world" and there cannot be any doubt that a derivation of the kind G. Thomson suggests was not in Engels' mind when he wrote these lines. Hence there would seem to exist, at first sight, a certain incompatibility between two materialistic ways of thinking, one tracing the basic principles of knowledge to a root in "social existence", the other deriving them from the "external world" by way of "abstraction" and "reflection". This apparent contradiction calls for a clarification of the position and this could be helped by a systematic enquiry into the implications of G. Thomson's conclusion. This seems a task worth undertaking as the theory of G. Thomson bears out most fully the principles of historical materialism stressing the determination of human consciousness by social existence. Secondly it promises, what no previous materialistic theory has ever suggested, a possibility of specific derivations of definite categories. And thirdly it aims at an understanding of any given forms of knowledge in their particular historical epoch and would thus inaugurate a historical-materialistic theory of knowledge.

The basis for our understanding must be a close form analysis of commodity exchange, itself the precise seat of the abstraction which, according to the suggestion under scrutiny, causes the abstract manner of thinking characteristic of epochs of fully-fledged commodity production. Our starting point is Marx's analysis of the commodity in the opening chapters of *Capital*.

(c) Marx's Analysis of Commodity

Marx lays great stress on the abstract nature of the commodity and uses such expressions as "value-abstraction" and "commodity-abstraction". What is meant by these terms is abstraction from use-value. "The material properties of the commodities only concern us here, in so far as they confer utility, so as to render the commodities use-values. On the other hand, the obvious characteristic of the exchange ratio between commodities is precisely this, that it is an abstraction from their use-values."[9] Thus by use-value of a commodity is understood the sum total of its physical properties, its entire sense-reality. The abstraction from use-value is seen as a purely objective, blind and factual function of

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[6] *The First Philosophers*, 1955, p. 301.

[7] L.c., p. 44.

[8] See his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. This theory has been very fully argued in recent years by Adam Schaff in several writings, among them *Zu einigen Fragen der Marxistischen Theorie der Wahrheit*, Dietz Berlin, 1954, 500 pp.

[9] L.c. (transl. by Eden & Cedar Paul), p. 6. This translation is more accurate than Aveling's which instead of "exchange ratio" (for Marx's *Austauschverhältnis*) has "exchange".

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commodity exchange. It is not intended by anybody, not consciously instituted by man, not sprung from his thoughts. On the contrary, the abstraction is not even noticeable to the exchanging agents who cause it by what they do. "They do not know it, but they do it."[10] The commodity owners are the deluded victims of whatever effects the abstraction that they themselves enact has upon their condition. The awareness of the abstraction comes to them *post festum* and leaves them guessing as to the origin. "The intermediate steps of the process vanish in the result and leave no trace behind."[11]

What makes exchange possess this abstractive function? This, obviously, is the crucial question. To any bourgeois economist or sociologist the Marxian teaching on the fetishism of commodity is pure speculation devoid of reality. But what is the argument upon which Marx's assertion rests? If we trace back the twenty-odd steps by which he reaches his conclusion, we meet as sheet-anchor of the derivation the reference to the function inherent in exchange of establishing an equation between the commodities exchanged.

> "In order to discover how the elementary expression of the value of a commodity lies hidden in the value relation of two commodities, we must, in the first place, consider the latter entirely apart from its quantitative aspect. . . . Linen = coat is the basis of the equation."[12]

(d) The Postulate of Equivalence

This equation Marx accepted as a basic postulate needing no proof beyond its mere statement. And it formed indeed the common ground of all economic value theory up to his day. The "equivalent" of a commodity is that which is "exchangeable" with it; these are synonymous terms to him. It is well known, however, that only four or five years after the appearance of the first volume of *Capital* bourgeois economics evolved the subjectivistic value theory (of marginal utility) which is based on the denial of the postulate of equivalence. This theory reduces exchange to the logic of choice, and choice presupposes difference, not equality of values. This makes idealism the methodological principle of economics, but however this may be, the exchange equation of values can no longer be treated as an axiomatic truth. It must be proved and traced to its foundation. This will not merely reconfirm the Marxian analysis of commodity but will inevitably enlarge upon it, and this enlargement entails, if I am not mistaken, its extension into the epistemological field.

[10] "Sie wissen das nicht, aber sie tun es." L.c., p. 45.

[11] L.c. (Aveling), p. 65.

[12] L.c. (Aveling), p. 17/8.

There is more than one way of approach to this task. The most obvious would be by means of a fully-fledged critique of subjectivistic economics, or at least of its theory of value, an undertaking impossible in a short article. There is, however, a short cut which has moreover the advantage that it eliminates the economic aspect focused upon the quantitative determination of value and confines our analysis to the purely formal characteristics of exchange.

(e) Separation of Exchange from Use

For this short cut we require a definition of use-value and of exchange-value and of their relationship, which satisfies the Marxian theory and which, at the same time, subjectivistic economists are powerless to reject. Accordingly we say: use-value is the aspect of a commodity as object of use,[13] exchange-value its aspect as object of exchange. Use and exchange are different actions in such a way that they are mutually exclusive in time. The root-cause of the abstractness of exchange is contained in this exclusion. The exclusion or separation in time between exchange and use as actions therefore carries paramount importance and must be understood in its essentials.

The point is that exchange and use are not only different and contrasting by description, but that they must perforce take place separately, at different times. While commodities are subject to a deal of exchange, they must remain exempt from use. The reason is that exchange serves one change only, a change of ownership, a change, that is, of a purely social status. And in order to make this change of ownership possible as a regular activity, the physical state of the commodity must be assumed to remain unchanged while their transfer is taking place. Therefore, wherever commodity exchange takes place, it does so in effective "abstraction" from use. This is an abstraction not in mind, but in fact; it is a state of affairs prevailing at a definite place and throughout a definite time. It is the state of affairs which reigns in the market.

The abstraction from use by no means implies, however, that the use-value of the commodities is of no importance in the market. On the contrary, it engages the interest of people in the most lively way. But it occupies them only in their minds, only subjectively and by thought; they may not put their interest into action. Hence, in the market and in the shop window things stand still. They are under the

[13] The word "use" here must be understood in a precise meaning: (1) the word signifies *act* of use, not a property of being usable (e.g., the use of a chair is to sit on it); (2) the word must retain its distinctive difference from exchange (e.g., it is admissible to speak of the "use" of a coin as material for jewellery, but not to speak of its "use" as money).

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spell of one activity only, that of changing their owners. While they are waiting to be sold their use-value is on show and for scrutiny. The scrutiny may take any form and go to any length short of causing damage to the commodities, that is, of affecting their material state, or of putting the commodities to their actual use.

The ban on use divides the people from the commodities and establishes a relationship closely akin to the "subject-object division" one finds described in the treatises of subjective idealism. People interested in the use-value of a commodity in the market are reduced to the passive role of receiving "sense impressions" and verifying them in tests leaving the material nature of the object intact.[14] With all the means at their disposal to satisfy their interest they cannot bridge the gap that separates them from the material reality of things which only use can give them and which therefore lies outside or "transcends" the sphere of the market. For use and the material practice with things[15] in production and consumption, in a commodity producing society, is relegated to the private spheres of the households, workshops, factories, etc., while in the public sphere, i.e. in the market, people gather for the radically different activity of exchange alone. With capitalist commodity production, moreover, at the stage when it reaches maturity—as it did in England in the eighteenth century—the market penetrates into the entire width and breadth of social life to become co-extensive with society itself.

The actual events, then, to which the market as such reserves recognition are the acts of exchange defined as actions concerned with the social status of commodities as owned property. In order to satisfy this definition the acts of exchange must be assumed to leave the physical state of the commodities unaffected. Nevertheless, the acts of exchange by no means lack physical reality themselves. They involve movement of things in time and space and represent events of no less physical reality than the acts of use which they rule out. It is precisely because their physical reality is on a par that both kinds of activity, exchange and use, are mutually exclusive in time.

In order to understand how this condition makes for the postulate of equivalence, it must be realised that the exclusion of use and the ensuing abstractness of exchange is tied to the reciprocity of the relationship. A one-sided appropriation or act of robbery does not exclude the simultaneous use of the robbed object. The abstractness makes for the identical equality of form of both commodities in their exchange relation to each other. But besides being thus identically equal in form they are both essentially unequal in use-value (equal use-values would not be exchanged one for the other). Therefore, the commodities in exchange are not equal themselves, but equal "in value". The notion of value as value-in-exchange is a purely relational concept the content of which is to postulate the equality of the unequal. At the same time it serves to commute the qualitative differences of the unequal into quantitative comparison of that which is postulated to be equal. Under the postulate of equivalence commodities are capable of none but quantitative differentiation.

(f) The Exchange Abstraction and its Pattern

I call exchange abstraction the effect which the exclusion of use has upon the description of acts of exchange. The term is closely related to, but not identical with, the Marxian terms of "commodity abstraction" and "value-abstraction"; on the other hand, I would regard it as an essential part of what Marx calls the "commodity form". Like the commodity abstraction with Marx, so the exchange abstraction in the light of the present analysis is a blind, essentially unnoticed result of the actions of people. The abstraction happens, as Marx puts it, "behind the backs" of people who, while they are taken up with their market activities, cannot have a mind for the formal implications of what they are doing. For it is not the people, it is their actions which cause the exchange abstraction.

The main importance of the exchange abstraction for our present purposes lies with the description of the acts of exchange, which it implies and which I shall refer to as "the pattern" of the exchange abstraction. It can be roughly given as abstract movement through abstract time and space of abstract substances which thereby suffer no material change and which allow for none but quantitative differentiation. The essential nature of the terms of this pattern is that they are form, pure form. They therefore allow for no other reflection than by pure thought.

Now it must be a feasible, if by no means easy task, to give a detailed and accurate description of the pattern and its terms, based upon a close and painstaking analysis of the exchange abstraction. It is my contention that anyone undertaking this task will find in it the formal genetic deduction of the concepts which in traditional philosophy are known as "the categories of the pure understanding" and which, whether in ontological or epistemological interpretation, have formed the chief bugbear of

[14] A closer, but quite easy analysis would retrace the essential features of subjective idealism in the characteristics of the market and give good cause for suspecting that this is in fact whence that philosophy unknowingly stems.

[15] For "material practice with things" see first *Thesis on Feuerbach*.

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theoretical philosophy since the "first philosophers".[16]

(g) The Rational Core of Theoretical Philosophy

For let us ask wherein lies, from a Marxist angle, the rational core of theoretical philosophy? It lies in the question: how is a valid knowledge of nature possible on a basis other than manual labour? Philosophy is as old as this problem. In ancient Greece it fell upon the philosophers themselves to seek knowledge of nature by intellectual labour; in modern Europe knowledge of nature became the work of science, and philosophers from Descartes onwards attempted to account for the possibility of science. They are still occupied with this task. In both cases knowledge of nature was an indispensable necessity for ruling classes of society based, in antiquity, on simple, and in modern Europe, on capitalist commodity production. Here as there, control over the process of production has passed from the manual producers to a class of non-producers exercising their class-rule as capitalists, that is, as owners of money power. A valid knowledge of nature from sources other than manual labour therefore was, and still is, an indispensable social necessity.

There is no room here to discuss the answers to this problem given throughout 2,500 years of philosophy until the present day, not excluding John Dewey, Wittgenstein, and Bertrand Russell. Suffice it to say that all the answers given are in timeless, unhistorical terms so that the needs of commodity producing societies are made to appear as inevitable for ever. To this manner of thinking we oppose a Marxist answer: the knowledge of nature necessary in commodity producing societies is based on the pattern of the exchange abstraction. It is knowledge of nature in commodity form.

(h) Matter in Motion

This answer cannot be argued here in detail so as to make it more than a suggestion. In support of it, however, consider two general characteristics of modern science and of its underlying pattern of thinking. One is by Engels:

> "Motion is the mode of existence of matter. Never anywhere has there been matter without motion, nor can there be. Motion in cosmic space, mechanical motion of smaller masses on the various celestial bodies, the motion of molecules as heat or as electrical magnetic currents, chemical combination or disintegration, organic life—at each given moment each individual atom of matter in the world is in one or other of these forms of motion, or in several forms of them at once."[17]

The other is by Bertrand Russell:

> "The theory that the physical world consists only of matter in motion was the basis of the accepted theories of sound, heat, light, and electricity."[18]

The association of matter with motion stems from Galileo's definition of inertia.[19] This definition was the finishing touch enabling Galileo to work out the mathematical and experimental method and to become the founder of modern science. How do we account for this epistemologically? In the light of Galileo's definition of inertia the pattern of the exchange abstraction assumes the meaning of the absolute minimum of what constitutes a physical event. Any event that can be constructed as a composite of this minimum is therefore *ipso facto* conceivable in terms of pure theoretical categories and amenable to mathematical treatment. This is in fact how modern science proceeds. Theoretical hypotheses in conceptual form and mathematical formulation are worked out and tested by confrontation with nature or rather with that carefully isolated part of nature of which the hypothesis contains the definition. This confrontation represents the experiment. If the experiments yield a reliable verification of the hypothesis the latter becomes an established "law of nature" in the shape of a law of recurrent events. And this is the result which one or the other capitalist has been waiting for in order to install a serial manufacturing process on the lines of a large-scale replica of the successful experiment. Knowledge of nature from sources other than manual labour is indeed his indispensable need.

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[16] "The abstraction of bourgeois objectivity is due to a similar abstraction in society." Chr. Caudwell, *The Crisis in Physics*, p. 80. Apart from G. Thomson, Caudwell is one of the Marxists whose investigations point in a direction akin to that pursued here.

[17] *Anti-Dühring*, p. 71.

[18] *A History of Western Philosophy*, p. 630. The sentence occurs in a discussion of Locke's doctrine as to primary and secondary qualities, of which B.R. says: "Ever since Berkeley, Locke's dualism on this point has been philosophically out of date. Nevertheless it dominated practical physics. . . . Not only was it assumed, explicitly or tacitly, by physicists, but it proved fruitful as a source of many very important discoveries," And after the sentence quoted in the text B.R. continues: "Pragmatically, the theory was useful, however mistaken it may have been theoretically." It is true that Locke's list and evaluation of "primary qualities" was faulty and more so the standard he applies to the division. But the division itself touches upon the very foundations of bourgeois science, and its fruitfulness is thus not quite as accidental as B.R. would make it appear.

[19] As formulated by Newton this definition reads: "Inertia is that property of matter by virtue of which it retains its state of rest or of uniform rectilinear motion so long as no foreign cause changes that state."

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(i) Reflection of the Exchange Abstraction

It was pointed out above that, as the exchange abstraction reduces the description of exchange to pure form, its pattern and any of its terms cannot be reflected except by pure thought. Our subsequent considerations were based on the assumption that this reflection had actually taken place. But the pattern of the exchange abstraction and its terms are not originally reflections. On the contrary, it presents a major problem to trace the way by which that pattern or any parts of it are conveyed to the conscious mind of people and take the shape of concepts. Again only a rough outline can be given here.

The key to the answer is that the exchange abstraction cannot find its way to the minds of people unless it assumes a visible representation. And the first visible representation of the exchange abstraction in history was none other than coined money. The essentials of its evolution were traced by Marx in the first chapter of *Capital* and I have to refer the reader to that analysis. However, a few salient points I must raise here.

(j) The Evolution of Coined Money

In a mere isolated, accidental case of exchange between any two parties the exchange abstraction evidently shows no trace at all. At a higher stage, which Marx calls "the expanded form of value", when exchange becomes multilateral and comprises a variety of commodities, one of these must serve as means of exchange with the others. Here too, this role does not convey to the commodity in question any appearance different from its use-value, although the latter is now vested with a postulate not to undergo any material change while it acts in this capacity. Still, the choice for this role falls upon a commodity which by its physical durability easily complies with the postulate. In this way the postulate of immutability, although springing from the nature of exchange, soon again appears to all concerned to be the outcome of the peculiar use-value of the commodity in question. The fact that a peculiar halo is likely to accrue to the latter will seem to confirm rather than to contradict the misleading appearance. This is notoriously so when the role of equivalent settles upon one or the other of the precious metals. "All this was still very undeveloped; the precious metals were beginning to be the predominant and general money commodity, but still uncoined, exchanging simply by their naked weight",[20] that is, in the appearance of objects of use. Therefore at each transaction they had to be weighed and cut or melted and tested for their metallic purity; in short, they had to be treated in accordance with their physical nature. But precisely this was the reason why they did not very well conform to the requirements of the market, and their inadequacies were not remedied until the invention of coinage. This portentous step was taken for the first time in history round about 700 B.C. on the Ionian side of the Aegean, in Lydia or Phrygia. The institution quickly spread, following as well as helping the marked commercial expansion in process at that epoch and finding imitation in the main Greek centres of maritime trade. The very introduction of coinage is a sure sign of commodity production entering upon its stage of "full growth". "From Ionia the new medium spread across the Aegean to Aigina, Euboia, Corinth, Athens, and a little later to the Greek colonies in Italy and Sicily. Thus Greek society was the first to be based on a monetary economy. The significance of this development has seldom been appreciated."[21]

(k) Independent Intellectual Labour

In coinage the previous relationship by which the value status of a commodity serving as money was subordinated to, and covered up by, its material status is reversed. A coin has it stamped upon its body that it is to serve as a means of exchange and not as an object of use. Its weight and metallic purity are guaranteed by the issuing authority so that, if by the wear and tear of circulation it has lost in weight, full replacement is provided. Its physical matter has visibly become a mere carrier of its social function. A coin, therefore, is a thing which conforms to the postulates of the exchange abstraction and is supposed, among other things, to consist of an immutable substance, a substance over which time has no power, and which stands in antithetic contrast to any matter found in nature.

Anybody who carries coins in his pocket and understands their function, bears in his mind, whether or not he is aware of it, ideas which, no matter how hazily, reflect the postulates of the exchange abstraction. To go about his marketing activities of buying and selling and to take advantage of the power of his money no clearer awareness is required. But to reflect upon the ideas involved, to become conscious of them, to formulate them, to take stock of them and to work out their interrelations, to probe into their uses and their implications, to recognise their antithetic contrast to the world of the senses and yet their intrinsic reference to it, etc.—this does not follow automatically from the use of coined money, but constitutes a clearly definable conditioned potentiality inherent in a monetary economy.

The social upheavals and class struggles ensuing from the development of this economy in the various

[20] F. Engels, *Origin of the Family*, etc., p. 186.

[21] George Thomson, l.c., p. 194.

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City States of ancient Greece created under the existing historical conditions the necessary incentives for tackling these tasks. To work out their solutions occupied the long line of philosophers from Thales to Aristotle throughout three hundred years of astounding intellectual effort. What came into existence here is the capacity of conceptual reasoning in terms of abstract universals, a capacity which established full intellectual independence from manual labour.

(l) False Consciousness

We became aware earlier that in the exchange abstraction time becomes unhistorical time and space becomes ungeographical space; they become "abstract time" and "abstract space", as we said, endless time and limitless space, and in this form the setting of a conception of the universe as nature in an antithetic contrast to man's own social world. This concept of nature did not exist before. It is nature in the strict sense of the object world, incompatible with any human and social connotations such as those in magic and mythology. Nature in this new sense constitutes the original and immediate subject matter of the independent intellect which, by means of the pattern of the exchange abstraction, is equipped for its conception and understanding. The timeless, unhistorical character is common to all concepts derived from the reflection of the abstract pattern of exchange.

On the other hand, the independent intellect has not a trace of its own origin. It has come to Man as the most mystifying mystery of all, his ununderstandable power of understanding. The mystery is sealed under a long variety of names—the *lógos*, the *nous*, the *intellectus purus*, the *ego cogitans*, the transcendental subject, the subject of cognition, "the" mind, etc., etc. But it is not only over its own self, it is over the entire field of Man's own social and human condition that the independent intellect casts the impenetrable shadow of false consciousness.[22]

This intellectual capacity has accrued to Man at the crucial juncture in history when he lost control over the social process. Thus his independent intellect is no more than the indispensable light to enable him to live in a world plunged in darkness. Only a very few philosophers were sufficiently aware of this condition to conceive of reason as a capacity for changing the darkness into daylight; Hegel was foremost among them, but even he could only think of changing a lower into a higher intellect ("den Verstand zur Vernunft zu bringen") and failed to realise that what was needed was "to change the world"[23] itself, that is, to end commodity production.

(m) Basis and Superstructure in Intellectual Work

Some part or aspect of intellectual work done by or on behalf of classes ruling by money power is basic and some other is superstructural in the Marxist sense, and it is important to distinguish with certainty between these parts.

The logical constitution of the intellectual work, i.e., that part which bestows the validity of correct thinking on such work, is necessarily determined. Indeed, it is deducible if our view is correct "with the precision of a natural science"[24] from the formal constitution of the nexus of commodity producing societies. This part is basic. On the other hand, this social nexus and the underlying economic conditions engender class antagonisms and class struggles which, in their turn, have inevitable effects on the feeling and thinking of the people involved, and these effects are not basic, but superstructural and "ideological", not judgeable on standards of objective truth. Thus, the derivation of the scientific mode of thinking from its roots in the exchange abstraction does not make science an "ideology".

Conclusion

We should now be in a position to clear up the apparent contradiction between the materialistic conception of George Thomson and that of Engels and Lenin. In fact, there is no contradiction. The analysis of commodity exchange enables us to understand the way by which the abstract concepts which form the foundation of our scientific knowledge of nature are derived from nature. They are derived from nature by a historical process which implies both abstraction and reflection. The abstraction takes place as a blind and purely functional result of commodity exchange and is inseparably connected with exchange from its first to its last days in history. Great stress must be laid upon the fact that commodity exchange does not create, but merely abstracts the form characteristics of exchange. And it abstracts them ultimately from nature by banning every kind of physical event in the market except the one of property transfers. The reflection, on the other hand, is a mental and conscious activity, and it is reflection of what is

[22] For the connotatations of this term I must refer the reader to G. Thomsonis book and to its last chapter headed "False Consciousness", as well as to the paragraph "Necessary false Conciousness" in a contribution of mine in *Modern Quarterly* Vol. 3, 1 (Winter 1947/8).

[23] Cf. the last of Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*.

[24] Marx in his outline of historical materialism of 1859. *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 356.

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abstract.[25] It is never an automatic necessity but in the nature of a conditioned potentiality which, in fact, was first given in history from the time when the exchange abstraction assumed visible appearance in coinage.[26] Money is the abstract thing. As compared with the first stage, the relationship between language and thought is here reversed. Thinking in abstract universals has its own independent foundation and consciously chooses the language to suit it. When this mode of thinking approaches maturity we witness the emancipation of logic from grammar.[27] Further, while the consciousness of individuals in tribal societies reflects the collective character of their activities, the intellect characteristic of civilisation is not only independent of manual work, but it is the independent intellect of individuals. However, the formal code or "ratio" of this intellect is one between all individuals since it is the pattern of the exchange abstraction.

The theory of knowledge to which our systematic enquiry has led us, is in the precise sense of the term a historical-materialistic one. It does not occupy the place of a *prima philosophia* (which must by necessity be timeless), but forms part and parcel of the understanding of the historical epochs under consideration, for instance, the epochs of civilisation as defined by Engels. True, it is the hall-mark of civilised thought that it is all in timeless, unhistorical terms. But we found that the unhistorical mode of thinking is itself historically conditioned. We found that the timeless mode of reasoning, and even the knowledge of nature necessary in commodity producing societies is based on the pattern of the exchange abstraction, on the commodity form. A society not relying on commodity exchange for its nexus, for instance, a modern communist society, would require a mode of knowledge based on a different foundation. It also would require for the first time in history a kind of knowledge not emerging blindly but equipped with a full understanding of its own origin and nature. Part of this understanding is the generalisation that for all epochs and societies the basic logical pattern of the socially necessary mode of knowledge is the same as the form pattern of the social nexus. The Marxian statement according to which the consciousness of men is determined by their social existence is true in a far more exact sense than is commonly appreciated.

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[25] This observation disposes of the metaphorical sense of the term "reflection" and gives it a precise meaning.

[26] It is, to my knowledge, a historical truth that conceptual reasoning emerged in history only in the wake of the introduction of coinage, not only in classical antiquity, but also in China and in India and here dried up when, as a result of deep-rooted economic changes, coinage disappeared again.

[27] Adam Schaff, in his *Introduction to Semantics* (1962), has some useful critical remarks directed against those neopositivists who, by making a philosophy of semantics, aim at drawing logic back into grammar.

WORLD MARXIST REVIEW 1965 - No. 3

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Labour, What Next?

Nigel Kelsey

COMRADE WAINWRIGHT in his article "Labour, What Next?" (January 1965) deals with our attitude to the Labour Party, arising out of the situation created by a Labour Government pursuing a policy which is not fundamentally different from that of its Tory predecessors. He reminds us of the trade union basis of the Labour Party and of the traditional conflict between left and right within it.

If we are to steer our way through the moods of elation and satisfaction on the one hand, and frustration and disillusion on the other; if we are to avoid the rightist and particularly the leftist distortions of Marxism which accompanied previous Labour Governments, the more discussion and clarity we have not only on our immediate attitude, but particularly on our long-term strategy, the better it will be for the Labour movement in general, and for the growth and development of our Party in particular.

Comrade Gollan in his article "Which Road?" which appeared in the issue of *Marxism Today* of July 1964, went into some detail on the question of the transition to socialism in Britain and quoted from the report of the Twenty-seventh National Party Congress, which Comrade Wainwright recommends us to re-read.

On the long-term aims John Gollan quoted:

> "For our part we look forward to a future when we shall be able to see the fulfilment of a united working class party based on Marxism."

I do not think that sufficient discussion has taken place within our Party on the future of relations between the Labour Party and the Communist Party. British Marxists have been faced, since the birth of the Labour Party, with the contradictions and problems arising from the dual needs of the British working class—on the one hand, the need for the building of a party based on Marxism which could lead all aspects of working class struggle, and on the other hand the existence of a Labour Party based on the majority of the organised workers but with a leadership consistently pursuing an opportunist policy because of its rejection of scientific socialism.

The resolution of the Twenty-fifth Party Congress marked a step forward from previous statements in its formulation on this issue:—

> "We see the development of unity stage by stage:
>
> "First, unity on every possible issue in every locality to the greatest possible degree.
>
> "At the same time we fight for an organised association with the Labour Party. The present stage here is the fight for the removal of bans and proscriptions.
>
> "The achievement of this aim would pave the way for bigger changes later, including the possibility of affiliation.
>
> "The stage of closer political unity possible, for example, in affiliation means that the Marxist view would still be a minority in the movement. *The eventual winning of the majority in the movement for that view, will then open up the possibility of a single working-class party based on Marxism*" [my italics].

Stages in the achievement of unity were thus envisaged, as the barriers created by the right wing of the movement in the past are broken down. The first step obviously must be the ending of all bans and proscriptions, and the restoration to the movement of at least the democracy that existed up to 1924, when Communists could represent their trade union organisations etc. on Labour Party management committees, be elected as delegates to Labour Party Conference, be individual members of the Labour Party and be nominated to stand as candidates for councils and Parliament.

When that degree of unity has been achieved, the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party will become a question of practical politics. It does not necessarily mean that it is the only possible development. Some working arrangement between the Labour Party and the Communist Party of a different character may be preferred. In this connection it might be remembered that many members of the Labour Party are also members of the Co-operative Party which is not affiliated to the Labour Party but has fraternal relations with it.

The Ultimate Aim

When we come to the ultimate aim of a fully united working class party, we should be very clear what we mean by the phrase "united working class party based on Marxism" which also appears in the *British Road*.

It all depends on what one means by the word "based". Here clarity ceases and several different interpretations are possible. Certain interpretations

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can harm our general strategy for the achievement of working class unity.

There is no doubt that many sincere Labour Party members genuinely fear the ultimate achievement of unity because they believe that a Communist Party, relatively small numerically, might, when bans and proscriptions have been lifted, win a card vote majority at a Labour Party Conference, or even win a genuine majority of the Labour Party to a Marxist point of view, and replace the present Labour Party by a Party similar to those set up in Eastern Europe based on mergers between Communist and Social-Democratic Parties. Such parties are of course based on democratic centralism and have no place within their ranks for non-Marxists or for those who disagree with their general strategy and line.

If the interpretation of a "united working class party based on Marxism" means a party based on democratic centralism and individual card membership, then there would seem to be at least some grounds for their fears if they do not fully go along with us in the Marxist approach.

The Labour Party leadership has always been intolerant towards its leftwing, and discriminates against Communists and Marxists generally, but at the same time, there has always been a greater range of political thought inside the British Labour Party than in the classical European Social-Democratic Parties. That the Labour Party should be open to all co-operative, trade union, socialist and other working class bodies was the desire of such founders of the Labour Party as Keir Hardie. These principles were departed from when the request of the newly-formed Communist Party for affiliation was rejected in 1920. The rejection of this application was however assisted by the sectarian form of the application. The principles of an all-embracing Labour Party were decisively flouted when the bans were introduced in 1924 and 1925 by the MacDonalds and company.

Special Conditions

In the *British Road* we examine some of the special conditions in Britain and present our conception of a parliamentary victory alongside mass activity, as a possible way for the British workers to capture political power. I believe we have to examine equally the special features of the British Labour movement and see what are the positive and negative features of this movement in the light of the *British Road*. We have to face up to the problems that the movement presents and the unique opportunities as well that it offers us.

Communists, apart from sectarian lapses from time to time, have seen the federal structure of the Labour Party as something of value to the working class in Britain. The Communist Party has worked to strengthen the Labour Party through trade union affiliation and the largest possible political-levy-paying membership. In the United States Communists have striven unsuccessfully in their aim of having a Labour or Labour-Farmer Party in their country for many years. Is there, in that federal structure, a form which is not only of great value for the workers in their political struggle against capitalism but also for the achievement and construction of Socialism? It is my contention that there is.

One of the problems in the building of socialism in all the countries where working class power has been achieved, is that of the relations between the Communist Party on the one hand and the mass of the working class and their organisations, on the other. The way the lead of the Party is presented to the workers and how their support is struggled for and won has been of crucial importance particularly in the countries of Eastern Europe. Events in those countries following the relaxation of the Stalin personality cult demonstrated clearly the dangers which arise when the Party's links with the masses are not strong enough.

China had to tackle the same problem and through the National People's Congress and the People's Consultative Conference appeared to be going some way towards solving it. Recently I understand these bodies have played a much smaller part and I don't think this can be separated from the general sectarian and dogmatic line of the C.P.C. National Fronts and People's Fronts were set up in the countries of Eastern Europe, and when correct methods of work have been carried out within them they have been of great value in the building of socialism.

It is my contention that the basis of such a People's Front would exist in the Labour Party with its federal structure, when unity between Labour and Communist workers has been achieved. It is true that the Labour Party has not such a wide basis among the population at the moment as some of these Fronts but it already goes some way towards it. At present apart from most of the largest trade unions it has one major co-operative society affiliated. More might well do so in the future if the Labour Party were to improve its attitude towards the co-operative movement. The day is surely not too far distant when the organisations of professional workers will be won not only for affiliation to the T.U.C. but also to the Labour Party itself. If this were to be achieved the Labour Party would represent almost all the constructive forces in the country (apart from the working farmers). It could in effect really become a National Party in the fullest sense of the word.

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When Communists are allowed to play their full and rightful part in a united Labour Party, our task will be, by example, persuasion and argument, to win the movement to our point of view on the general line of advance to socialism, in the same way as Communists in a factory or trade union aim to get support from the workers for their point of view.

We will of course, not only be working to win the movement to support our immediate policies but also to convince the members of the correctness of the Marxist view as a whole. We will be striving to win the Labour Party to the acceptance of a programme with aims and objects based on Marxism. In such a sense our ultimate aim of a "united working class party based on Marxism" could not be objected to as being undemocratic by any sincere Labour Party member whether they disagreed with us or not.

A Federal Party?

At present left-wing members of the Labour Party remain members despite the opportunist policy which is the official line. In just the same way in the future, I envisage those who do not necessarily go the whole way with the Marxists could still remain members of a federal party which had an overall Marxist programme and policy. Many non-Marxists are loyal members of the National Fronts, etc. in the socialist countries, which are led by Communists and carry out a Marxist policy.

We accept in the *British Road* the existence of opposition parties where they have a genuine basis in the population. We can, it seems to me, accept the possible existence of more than one trend in the Labour movement, disagreeing on tactical questions while united in loyalty to the working class and to socialism. We couldn't obviously accept more than one trend within the Communist Party however.

We must remember that many members of the Labour Party, affiliated through their trade union, have a very tenuous connection with it. In many cases they are only members because they have not troubled to fill in a contracting-out form, and in some cases actually vote Tory in elections.

When the Labour Party has been won for a fuller democracy the "card-vote" members must be won to take a greater interest in the movement and to share in the making of decisions. A real loyalty to the Labour movement would have to be forged in the broad ranks of the working class, and that would mean nearly every member.

Even when this had taken place it would be too much to expect all to be fired with socialist zeal. Would we then reject such members? If our aim is the achievement of a united working class party based on the organisation principles of the Party of the New Type, of democratic centralism, we would obviously have no room for those who did not measure up to the obligations that such a party requires from its members. In no socialist country today are the majority of the workers enrolled inside the Communist or Workers' Party. If the federal structure of the Labour Party were destroyed and it became a party of individual members the need would *still* exist for a federal political organisation to include all the workers and not just the vanguard.

Of course contradictions might still remain in the existence of Communist organisations alongside Labour Party local (ward) organisations based on individual members. Perhaps fusion between these organisations would be ultimately achieved based on the forms of democratic centralism. Those however who did not accept this organisational form would still be represented through their mass organisation. Organisations based on factories etc. would be much more likely to be predominant, but the problem and its solution would be the same. Such changes however would not destroy the federal structure of the Labour Party as a whole, either on a national or local basis. Local Labour Parties based on the united strength of the working class movement of a given area would have a tremendous role to play in the winning of power and the building of socialism. Within factories, united organisations of the workers would become the solid basis of working class leadership at the point of production.

It may be argued that it is pointless or even harmful to discuss what may happen in completely different political circumstances from those existing at the moment. It is true that we cannot lay down a blue print for the future Labour movement, but neither can we do so for the political and state forms of a socialist Britain. One of the reasons for the *British Road* was to remove misconceptions as to how British Communists envisaged the achievement of socialism in Britain.

It is equally necessary to remove misconceptions as to our attitude to the Labour movement in Britain.

Just as we place the broad perspectives of a British Road to Socialism before the Labour movement we can present the broad perspectives of a future Labour movement, united, democratic, strong and confident striding with seven-league boots along that road.

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Problems of Inflation

James Harvey and William McCallum

IN his article in the December issue of *Marxism Today* Emile Burns argues that since the war inflation has been caused mainly by the capitalists and their governments arbitrarily raising prices, as a deliberate act of class policy, in order to reduce the value of money wages and thus keep real wages down. He presents a picture of the workers desperately trying to catch up with rising prices but in general not succeeding in doing so.

We shall argue that this explanation fails because it does not fit the facts. On the contrary, when money wages have risen faster than productivity (and this has happened in most years since the war), the increased labour costs have to a large extent been passed on by employers in the form of higher prices; and this has in fact been the principal cause of the post-war inflation both in Britain and in all the other main capitalist countries.

The reason why wages have risen faster than productivity year after year is in our view primarily the result of the greatly increased industrial and political strength of the working class movement. Before the war the position was quite different. The basic contradiction within capitalist society, between private ownership of the productive forces and the social character of production, then had its classical and sharpest expression in the economic field in the frequent recurrence of acute economic crises involving large increases in unemployment. Since the war, however, the ruling class fears of the political consequences of a repetition of the 'thirties have compelled their governments to pursue policies of full (or relatively full) employment. This has led to the maintenance of a high level of demand for goods and labour which has simultaneously strengthened the hands of the trade unions and permitted employers to pass wage increases on to prices. *The basic contradiction within capitalism remains the same as before, but it no longer finds expression in mass unemployment and a decline in production; instead, it takes the form of a more or less continuous rise in prices.*

The classical economic crisis had a direct effect on production. Inflation, on the other hand, has held back production indirectly, by causing the government to take deflationary measures designed to achieve price stability, measures which have been the direct cause of the stagnation of the British economy. The determination of the British ruling class to achieve price stability has been dictated by fears of the political repercussions of inflation, by the changing balance of international competition for markets, and by the desire to maintain Britain's position as a world banker. Thus the social relations of production remain as fetters on the productive forces, but their mode of operation has changed.

The Process of Cost Inflation

Our argument implies that cost factors as well as demand factors have operated to cause inflation in the post-war period, and that those from the side of costs have been the more important. Emile Burns allows that rises in prices of imported materials have led to rises in the domestic price level. But apart from this, he seems to take the view that inflation has been mainly due to excess demand, in the sense of "too much money chasing too few goods" (p. 371). This is the situation that arises in a boom, when employers are able to raise their prices in a sellers' market, even though their costs may not have risen in proportion. This has undoubtedly been an important cause of inflation, particularly in the immediate post-war years and in the boom conditions in the early 'fifties. But it is very far from a complete explanation of price rises since the war. We have space only for two examples of the failure of Emile Burns's theory to fit the facts.

(1) It does not explain why prices continued to rise between 1955 and 1958. During this period output rose only slowly, surplus capacity developed in manufacturing industry, and unemployment rose from 1.08 per cent in 1955 to 2.1 per cent in 1958. All the evidence goes to show that there was no excess demand.[1] Prices of raw materials used in manufacturing, which had been rising all through the early 'fifties, fell sharply in 1957 and remained stable all through 1958 at a level 2½ per cent below that of 1955. Nevertheless the index of total final prices rose from 103.5 in 1955 to 115.1 in 1958. The rise in prices continued, though more slowly, right through the depression year of 1958. The only possible explanation is that the continuing rise in labour costs was passed on by employers in higher prices.

Labour costs rose because money wages increased faster than productivity. Weekly earnings rose by 7½ per cent between 1955 and 1956, by 6 per cent

[1] "Price Stability and the Policy of Deflation", *National Institute Economic Review*, May 1959.

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between 1956 and 1957, and by 2 per cent between 1957 and 1958. On the other hand, whereas the average annual increase in output per man was 4½ per cent from 1952 to 1955, it was only ¼ per cent from the end of 1955 to the end of 1958. The net result of these two factors—rising money wages and almost stationary productivity—was that labour costs per unit of output rose by an annual average of 5½ per cent from the end of 1955 to the end of 1958. Thus the force behind the rise in prices during this period was the rise in money wages, unmitigated by an increase in productivity.

(2) If rising prices have been mainly caused by excess demand we should expect to find a widening of profit margins as business men responded to boom conditions by raising prices, with the prices of raw materials and wages being dragged up behind. But no such widening has in fact taken place; profit margins have remained remarkably steady throughout the post-war period.[2]

Emile Burns states that capitalists put up the prices of their products "on the excuse of higher wages costs", and that they raise prices "not just by the actual rise in wage costs but by considerably more" and in support of this he cites one instance only, namely, the rise in engineering prices early in 1964. But if capitalists had consistently behaved in this way all through the post-war period their profit margins *must* have widened.

Emile Burns also supports his thesis that wages are always trying to catch up with price rises with a table comparing the movement of retail prices and wage *rates*, and showing that since 1946 these have risen at about the same rate. But if we are examining the causes of inflation we must use figures of actual *earnings*. An employer is affected, not by the nationally negotiated rate, but by the actual wages he has to pay out to his workers and it is these that present themselves to him as a cost that he endeavours to pass on in higher prices.

Between 1945 and 1960 the working class in fact succeeded in pushing up money wages faster than prices by an average amount of 2¼ per cent per year. (This rise in real wages measures the rise in the standard of living that took place, and is a measure of the achievement of all the trade union struggles during the period.) Moreover, the annual average rise in productivity was also about 2¼ per cent.[2] Thus increases in wages have been passed on to prices except in so far as productivity has risen, the capitalists have managed to maintain their profit margins, and the division of the national product between capital and labour has remained about the same.[3]

Profit margins have not, of course, stayed absolutely constant since the war but have varied from time to time in response to changes in demand. Whereas a sellers' market creates an opportunity to widen profit margins, the reverse happens when demand is slack. In other words, short-run changes in demand are liable to cause short-run variations around a trend of rising prices, this trend itself being basically determined by rising costs.

* * *

It is important to make clear what our theory of inflation does *not* mean.

First, it does not imply that wage increases *initiate* the rise in prices. It may well be that each wage increase follows a rise in prices (although other considerations, such as raising the levels of the lower paid, sharing in increased productivity, etc., have played a part in wage negotiations) but what is crucial is the ability to raise money wages *faster* than prices irrespective of which rose first. Over the post-war period as a whole this ability cannot be doubted as the quite substantial gains in real wages make clear.

Second, the view we are putting forward does not imply that demand plays no part in the inflationary process. On the contrary, cost inflation is only possible because a reasonably high level of demand has existed ever since the war as a consequence of the maintenance of relatively full employment, itself the product of the strength of the working class movement. But a given state of real demand relative to capacity is consistent with a wide range of possible rates of price rise. In other words, the role of demand is *permissive*, in that a given minimum level of real demand permits prices to rise but the actual rate of price rise is determined by the rate at which money wages are rising in relation to productivity. So long as the level of demand is above a certain minimum a self-sustaining price rise is possible without the existence of a general excess of demand over supply.

In this connection it is important to note that on the one hand rises in money wages generally occur more or less simultaneously throughout an industry so that employers can raise prices with the fair certainty that their competitors are doing the same under the same stimulus, and on the other hand that to some extent and for a wide range of industries, a rise in wage costs represents a simultaneous rise in monetary demand which economically speaking "justifies" the employers in raising prices.

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[2] The most careful calculations of profit margins are by J. C. R. Dow, covering 1946-60, in *The Management of the British Economy*, p. 248.

[2] Dow, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

[3] C. H. Peinstein, *London and Cambridge Economic Bulletin*, June 1964.

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Consequences of the theory

Ruling circles in Britain have only accepted with great reluctance the views of those bourgeois economists who have stressed the role of costs in the inflationary process. During most of the 'fifties the dominant view in the Treasury and governing circles was that excess demand played the main role[4] and that inflation could therefore be prevented so long as the government took sufficiently severe deflationary measures to restrain demand and create unemployment; on this view an incomes policy was unnecessary. But the persistent rise in prices all through the years 1955-58, when there was clearly no excess demand, finally undermined the position of those who held this outlook. The First Report of the Three Wise Men in 1958 was, as it were, the last ditch stand of the demand inflationists. The Fourth Report, issued in 1961, fully accepted the "upward push of rates of pay" as a major cause of inflation.[5] A parallel change of opinion took place on the continent, as can be seen by comparing the first O.E.E.C. report on inflation published in 1952 (blaming excess demand) with the second report issued in 1961, stressing the central role played by wage increases and urging all member governments to adopt an incomes policy.[6]

The ruling classes in Britain and on the continent have naturally been unwilling to accept the need for an incomes policy (and the economic theory justifying it) because the recognition, however formal, that all incomes ought to be *planned* by the State carries with it all sorts of dangers from their point of view. The adoption by the State of partial planning is bound sooner or later to stimulate the demand by the Labour movement for real planning and for more effective measures by the State to restrain the freedom of the capitalists. Nevertheless, economic developments in recent years (together with the failure to prevent money wages from rising even with a degree of unemployment) have compelled ruling circles, here and abroad, to adopt an incomes policy.

From the point of view of the working class, on the other hand, this analysis of the causes of inflation leads to the conclusion that the struggle for a better standard of living cannot be confined to the industrial battle for higher money wages, since the undoubted achievements of the trade unions in raising money wages since the war have been to a considerable extent frustrated by the defensive action of the monopolists in raising prices. It follows that the working class must enter into the political battle against inflation by demanding that the State should take the necessary measures to prevent it—restricting the freedom of the capitalists to raise prices, for example, and promoting the growth of the economy so as to raise the rate of increase in productivity, which has been so drastically held back by ruling class policies against inflation.[7]

The struggle between the two classes over the distribution of the national product is becoming more and more a political struggle. Economics is being transformed ever more obviously into political economy. If we are right in thinking that inflation has become the principal expression of the basic economic contradiction within monopoly capitalism, it will (like unemployment) not be overcome completely until capitalism has been abolished, but the struggle to defeat it can very greatly strengthen the working class movement and hasten the end of capitalism. It is all the more important, therefore, that a political party seeking to lead the fight against inflation and retarded economic growth should base its activities on a correct understanding of the inflationary process.[8]

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[4] This has also been the dominant view in the Communist Party and its main publications for reasons which deserve analysis.

[5] *Council on Prices, Productivity and Incomes. First Report, 1958. Second Report, July 1961.* The change of opinion inside the Treasury between 1957 (guiding light rejected by Thorneycroft) and February 1962 (Selwyn Lloyd's guiding light White Paper) is charted by Samuel Brittan in his recent Pelican, *The Treasury under the Tories, 1951-64.*

[6] *Report of Experts Committee appointed by the Council of O.E.E.C.* (O.E.E.C. Information Division, Paris, June 1952) and *The Problem of Rising Prices*, a report prepared by six economists for the Council of O.E.E.C., 1961.

[7] The working out of a comprehensive policy against inflation requires an analysis of the imperialist and other conditions which have caused Britain to suffer more severely from the consequences of inflation than the other major capitalist countries. This is a task which urgently needs to be done.

[8] An article "Inflation as an Economic Policy" by the Italian Marxist Amedeo Grano is published in the January 1965 issue of the British Communist Party's *Economic Bulletin* (1s. 6d., from Central Books).

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